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GST INCLUSIVE

Olympic Finally Secure GF Spot

By Daniel Kuziow

Premiers the Olympic Sharks gave themselves an 11th-hour reprieve from Finals extinction after a come from behind victory over their Sydney rivals the Parramatta Power, to secure their Grand Final appearance against the Perth Glory.

In testing conditions at Toyota Park a second half brace, from striker Ante Milicic was enough to send Lee Sterrey's side into their second consecutive showdown with the Glory-but not before the Power had sent shockwaves through their camp.

Olympic, well aware that nothing more than a win would condemn them to the scrapheap started nervously and after only nine minutes, a neat Power breakout found Matthew Thompson free on the right hand side. In the slippery conditions, Thompson sent in an ideal cross that skimmed the boot of Ante Juric, before John Buonavoglia at the back post who side footed from 12 yards and past Clint Bolton.

That marked a period of sustained pressure from the visiting side who were unlucky not to go ahead further, particularly after Buonavoglia had lobbed in a cross onto the head of Thompson, whose header was deflected narrowly wide for a corner.

But the introduction of Joel Porter for the largely ineffective Wayne Shroff proved to be a turning point in the game as

his running through midfield gave the Sharks offence some much needed drive.

And it was indeed Porter who provided the cross for the Jeromy Harris equaliser on 36 minutes. Picking the ball up after Power had cleared a corner, Porter sized up a perfect cross, finding Harris unmarked at eight yards who planted his header a few feet inside the right hand upright.

With the game evenly poised at half time, news filtered through to Sydney that the Adelaide City Force had opened up a two nil lead with first half strikes to Lucas Pantelis after 25 minutes and Shane Smeltz on 42 minutes.

Nevertheless, the defending champions responded to the challenge with Milicic scoring from the penalty spot on 64 minutes after Tom Podeljak had been felled in the area and he converted again ten minutes later when he pounced on a rebound from Daniel Vukovic after Troy Halpin had sent in a tidy shot to give the Sharks their belated Grand Final ticket.

Sadly for the Force, that two goal second half meant their other four goals would become little more than a consolation in an otherwise impressive six goal drubbing of the Northern Spirit.

On 49 minutes Pantelis' looping cross found Iain Fyfe and Scott Tunbridge converted his downward header.

Ten minutes later with Adelaide pushing forward, Goran Lozanovski's cross found an unmarked Tunbridge and he

headed home for the fourth goal and his second.

Adelaide was now on a high and Lozanovski again turned provider when he shook off Andrew McDermott's challenge and crossed to the back post where Fyfe was on hand to shoot home.

And it was Fyfe again who scored the Force's final goal of the season right on full time when he got onto the end of a Matthew Kemp cross.

In the other match of the round Newcastle United signed off with an impressive single goal victory against an understrength Perth Glory side.

Mich D'Avray whose mind was clearly on this week's big showdown rested no fewer than nine of his first team regulars and this clearly told as Adam Hughes notched the game's winner on 23 minutes.

Hughes was able to steer his shot goalward after a United corner had bounced around in the penalty area giving the Novocastrians some overdue joy in an otherwise disappointing finals campaign.

The Glory loss was only their second in ten weeks, but few can blame D'Avray for steering away from a club record eight straight victory, when his focus is surely on the bigger prize after three previously fruitless attempts.

So for the second year its east versus west as Olympic meet the Perth Glory at Subiaco Oval. Turn to page three for a full preview of the eagerly contested match.



Who will be celebrating this Sunday afternoon?

Grand Final Preview Perth Glory v Olympic Sharks

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CAHILL GETS HIS WAY

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8 Team Competition Next Season?

By Mark Stavroulakis

The National Soccer League again has been hit with rumors that the competition will take an eight-team stance in a proposed plan to re-vamp the competition next year.

A number of secret meetings and discussions have taken place as to how many sides will stand in the following season with numbers ranging from 14 right down to the more recent eight style series.

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NEGUS COMMENTS ON THE CRAWFORD REPORT

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BY DANIEL KUZIOW

Leeds midfielder Paul Okon will consider leaving Elland Road if he fails to hold down a first-team place, according to the player's agent.

The Australia international has played just once under current boss Peter Reid, despite signing a three-year deal last August.

The 31-year-old made 20 appearances for United under Reid's predecessor Terry Venables after taking four months to make his debut because of foot and hamstring injuries.

Okon's agent Leo Karis told Australian newspaper *The Age*: "I plan to have some discussions with people at Leeds over the next couple of weeks."

"If the indications are that he will not figure as prominently under Peter Reid, he may look at his options."

"Paul is keen to play regular football week-in and week-out and if he is not going to do that at Leeds he would consider doing it elsewhere."

"Paul feels he can still offer something at this level and he is determined to go to the next World Cup, so he must look not just at his short-term future but his long-term as well."

Ancona coach Luigi Simoni has told planetfootball of his surprise at being linked with Australians Stan Lazaridis and Paul Okon.

The English based duo were linked with the promotion-chasing Serie B side, although winger Lazaridis has since signed a two-year extension to his deal with Birmingham City.

However, Ancona's veteran coach Simoni admitted he was a little taken-aback by the rumours, admitting that he would have expected to hear of the interest.

"I have not given any indication as to who I want bringing in," admitted the 64-year-old.

"I am surprised by these rumours."

"Maybe the club are gathering information on the players on their own initiative, but we shall discuss everything at the end of the season, as we have always done."

"I do know both players but I haven't watched them recently."

"I haven't seen Okon since he left Italy, where he played for Fiorentina and Lazio so I am not in a position to comment."

"We will have to be very careful about who we bring in during the next transfer window."

"With our financial situation we cannot afford to make mistakes."

"Luckily we are a club that have proved good at recruiting good players on small wages."

"We do not worry about their age - we already have seven players of over 31 in the squad."

Milwall midfielder Tim Cahill has won his battle to play for Australia.

Cahill had been prevented from playing for the Socceroos because he made a substitute appearance for Western Samoa Under-17s when aged 14.



Tim Cahill: Has won his dispute with FIFA and is now eligible to play for Australia.

The 23-year-old has been battling for nine years to play for the country of his birth and now football's world governing body has now agreed to change its eligibility rules.

Cahill was delighted at being given the go-ahead to play for Australia after a long hard battle.

"This is such a special moment," said Cahill. "Playing for Australia has always been the ultimate dream and now I can start thinking of playing in a World Cup."

Read more on the Tim Cahill issue on page 4 with an exclusive interview taken by ABSW's Peter Damalas.

Danny Tiatto is convinced he is over the worst of his groin injury at Manchester City.

The former Australia international is returning to England early for pre-season to continue rehab on an injury that has kept him out of the first team since Boxing Day.

Tiatto played an hour in the Manchester Senior Cup final against Oldham before he jetted to Australia for his summer break.

"I have rested as much as I can so it is just going to be strengthening work from now on," said Tiatto.

"I'm going to give it that extra time just to make sure that it will be 100 per cent when I come back."

"This season has been a bit of a write-off but these things happen. Injuries are a part of the game."

"I'm just going to come back stronger, make sure I get a good pre-season under my belt and kick on from there. I wanted to make sure I played a game before I go back home to give everyone that peace of mind - that is me, the manager and all the coaching staff."

"They all wanted to know whether my groin was right."

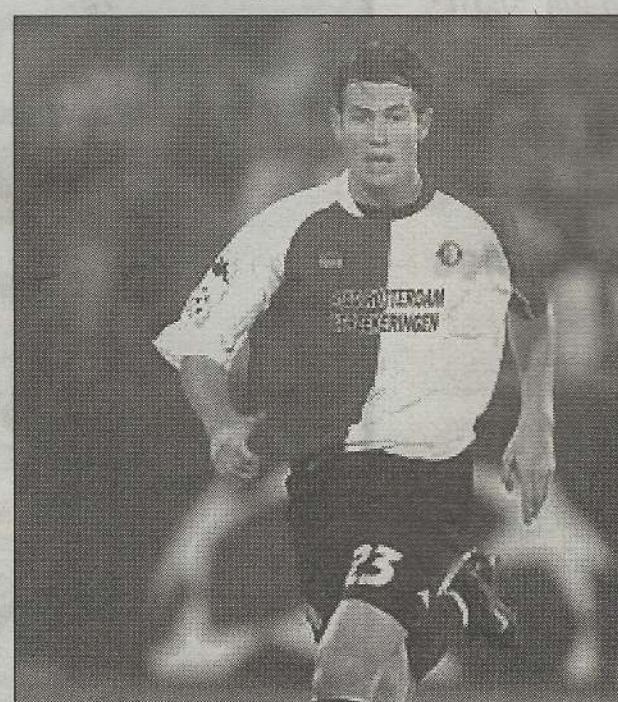
"I was a little bit hesitant before I went in for the first tackle but it was all right when I opened myself up and started throwing myself about."

"I know my groin is ok now and I won't need an operation."

"I have tested it now and hopefully I'll be right for next season. I'm concentrating on working hard over the summer and I'll be coming back a bit earlier than the rest. I should imagine there will be a couple of other lads joining me, too."

Brett Emerton is the subject of a transfer rumour linking him to Premier League club Middlesbrough.

The 23-year-old has been linked with a move to England



Brett Emerton: Talk has it that the Feyenoord star could go to Riverside next season?

We're again thought to be on Sir Bobby Robson's shopping list.

However sources from Rotterdam have now indicated that Middlesbrough, who showed an interest in Emerton during Terry Venables's tenure at The Riverside, have again made contact with Feyenoord and Boro are in real need of a player to replace Geremi, who looks set to move back to Madrid after his loan spell on Teesside came to an end.

The Teessiders are continuing talks with Real, but manager Steve McLaren is understand-

ably taking a look at other prospective targets - including Australian Emerton.

Former Perth Glory midfielder Antonio Naglieri has joined Cockburn City following extended trials in Europe. The ex-Australia U17 international trained with Cardiff City, Perugia and Ternana before injury struck and he was forced to return home. "It was a good experience," he told the West Australian.

"Now I just need to get games under my belt. If I play well enough hopefully something will pop up again either in the NSL or overseas."

Australia U23 international goalkeeper Peter Zois agreed terms last week on a three-year contract with Willem II.

The NAC Breda shotstopper

will move to Willem II at the end of the season on a Bosman transfer.

Zois' agent, Lou Sticca, has been in talks with Willem II chief Barry Hulshof for some months and finalised the deal in the early hours of this morning.

"It's a fantastic deal for Peter," Sticca told tribalfootball.com. "Willem II have been chasing him since January and we've maintained regular contact."

"There was very strong interest from Scotland and Italy, but with Peter's family settled in Holland he really wanted to stay there."

Willem goalkeeping coach Frank Brugel pushed club management to move for the 24-year-old Australian after learning he was coming out of contract at the end of this season.

"For a player whose rarely seen first team action in Holland, he's rated very highly within the game over there," continued Sticca.

"NAC Breda really wanted to hold onto Peter, but their financial problems are well known."

"I was fielding enquiries from SPL clubs and we had scouts looking at Peter in reserve-team games from Scotland, the Serie A and English First Division."

"Frank Brugel is convinced Willem II have signed a terrific young player and he's told me he'll do all he can to help Peter win a spot in the Socceroos squad."

WHAT WILL COME OF THE 90 MINUTES?

Grand Final Preview-Perth Glory versus the Olympic Sharks

By Daniel Kuziora

Will Sunday's Grand Final be the chance to exorcise some enduring demons or will Sunday's Grand Final be the chance to extend bragging rights?

We have the Grand Final many pundits predicted at the start of the 2002/2003 season and after an exhaustive 36 round competition have come to the culmination of a National Soccer League season filled with a cavalcade of lasting memories and events.

But all that is now swept aside as the two best sides-the Perth Glory and the Olympic Sharks square off in their second consecutive Grand final in a game that promises so much for the players and fans alike.

The Glory club-a revelation in all things soccer has lead the way in terms of



Olympic meanwhile are a club steeped in a rich and successful history. As one of the founding clubs, the Sharks have an enduring winning culture and no where is this better reflected than in their most recent achievements. Walking into

attendance, administration and of course results. To date however, the thing that has eluded the team has been a coveted Grand Finals winners medal.

In the lead up to the game, the Glory had amassed some 27 goals with Despotovski helping himself to 12 of those, while Milicic fresh from his two goal brace

Colosimo having returned to the National League after an unsuccessful stint in Europe has been a revelation in his new attacking role, while Gumprecht's debut season

while at the back end of the game, Jason Petkovic and Clint Bolton-the two best 'keepers playing in the National League, the fate of the game may very well rest on one or two crucial saves.

So now that it's here let us sit back and take in what is sure to be a great tussle between two great sides-a chance to renew old rivalries and the chance to be crowned the 2002/2003 NSL Champions.



against the Power has collected eight in the last month and a half of football.

The combination of Simon Colosimo and Andre Gumprecht up against the pairing of Troy Halpin and Tom Podeljak will surely be a feature of the match.

8 Team Competition Next Season?

(continued from front page)

Sources from inside have stated that pending on what happens between the internal bickering between current Soccer Australia directors Paul Afkos, Les Avory, Dominic Galati and Frank Lowy, will see the competition either increase or decrease in clubs from the National League.

It is believed that if Lowy gains his way as soccer's head honcho then an eight-team style will be adopted.

Labelled as Australia's

second richest person, Lowy has offered to become chairman of a new-look six-member SA board at the recommendation of the recent Crawford Report.

Alongside Lowy will be current chairman of the committee organizing the 2006 Commonwealth Games in Melbourne Ron Walker, Advertising 'Guru' John Singleton and soccer fanatic and former team manager of the Northern Spirit Phillip Wolanski.

Under his new plan, its

been rumoured that the Perth Glory, Newcastle United, Brisbane Strikers, Adelaide City Force, Wollongong Wolves, South Melbourne, Parramatta Power and the Football Kingz will be in next years competition.

Speculation also has it that former SA chairman Remo Nogarotto has been mentioned as a possible candidate acting as a consultant for Lowy's new side.

Talk of taking the English Premier League approach whereby the clubs will look

after themselves in finances rather than a soccer governing body (Ala Soccer Australia) will also be put to use.

It will look as though SA will only have the power to run the National Team squads, ie Socceroos, Young Socceroos, Joeys and Matildas.

Under Lowy's leadership, it's also been rumoured that a large figure of funds will automatically be injected into the game thanks to various corporate sponsors and help from Channel 7.

A link with Asia has also been spoken about as well with the possibility of our top National League sides taking

part in the Asian Champions League as well.

If this is so and that all these rumors are true, then why not give this a chance if it's for the good of the game?

Australian soccer followers have been starved for far too long with the destruction of the sport in this country thanks to our poorly run administration.

If businessmen such as Lowy, Singleton and Co believe that they have the right tonic to lift the sport then why not give them a go?

The clock's ticking and the game is on its death bed-the resurrection of the soccer code is a sight many people are urging to see.



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Tim Cahill: "Nothing is going to stop me"



Tim Cahill: Millwall star was delighted upon receiving the news that he will be eligible to play for Australia in future internationals.

Bickering continues over Soccer

The bickering and bad feeling hanging over the reform of soccer in this country has continued with the Australian Sports Commission responding in kind to an attack from acting Soccer Australia chairman Les Avory.

The bickering and bad feeling hanging over the reform of soccer in this country has continued with the Australian Sports Commission responding in kind to an attack from acting Soccer Australia chairman Les Avory.

Avory, one of three incumbent SA directors who want to remain powerbrokers under would-be chairman Sir Frank Lowy, said the sports commission's handling of the Crawford report's implementation had been a disgrace and an abuse of office.

ASC chief executive Mark Peters took umbrage at comments from Avory and rejected claims that the ASC had been hostile to the SA board and that the release of the recommendations in the Crawford report had been mishandled.

"I'm amazed at those sorts of comments," Peters told SBS television.

The Crawford report was an independent report — the commission, as always, said that it expects soccer to embrace it and particularly the soccer board to embrace it."

It is understood Avory and fellow SA directors Paul Afkosh and Dominic Galati want to be nominated to form part of the new board under the chairmanship of Lowy.

But Lowy has already made it clear he wants to hand-pick the entire board and is expected to walk away if he does not get his wish.

While the incumbent board members still need a majority vote from the game's stakeholders - the clubs and states - the whole reform process will derail if they manage to get the numbers.

"We're not quite sure what the motives are of those few remaining board members," Peters said.

"I think there's a few scare tactics out there. I can only ask why

are these three people trying to hold on when the vast majority of the soccer fraternity want to move this forward."

In defending the ASC's involvement in the reform process, Peters pointed out that his body was the primary source of funds for SA and that the ASC had a responsibility to ensure the game was adequately governed.

"Through our involvement in the Crawford Review and the process to implement its subsequent recommendations we have tried to ensure that this responsibility is fully met.

"As a commission we have no option.

"We fund Soccer Australia to the tune of about 2.4 million dollars a year of which we've paid 2.2 million yet we're hearing accusations from the present board about us driving them to bankruptcy - we've got concerns about the finances of Soccer Australia.

"Our latest information is that they will run to deficit this year."

By Peter Damalas

At last. The player at the centre of the country allegiance issue, Tim Cahill, will be eligible to play for the Socceroos after a brief appearance for Samoa in a youth tournament put his international career in serious jeopardy.

At the end of a nine year struggle with FIFA, Cahill will be part of the fold when Australian teams are selected in 2004 and beyond.

The decision to give players under the age of twenty-one the opportunity to change allegiance once (depending on them having dual citizenship) was reached at the latest executive meeting of FIFA in Zurich, the Sydney Morning Herald revealed. Players over the age of twenty-one may lodge a formal request to FIFA for the same purpose.

Despite missing out on the opportunity to play for Australia in the various World Youth Championships, Cahill, now 23, has the chance to start afresh and make up for lost time. The timing of FIFA's decision could not have come at a better time for the Millwall FC midfielder, who is expected to figure prominently in coach Frank Farina's World Cup plans when qualifiers begin in September next year.

"I can't believe it" he said, "it's been so long, a nine year battle, and I honestly never thought it would come true. It's amazing."

Cahill has been supported during these years by a number of groups in Australia and in England, who have taken up his cause because of the trivial nature of his original appearance with Samoa.

"I was helped out by people like Basil Scarsella, Michael Cockerill and [ABSW's] Stuart Jones, who took my name to the governing body. Frank Farina has always asked me what my status was, and my parents also put in their five cents worth" he said.

Cahill played for Samoa at the age of fourteen, in an Under 21 tournament, but was not aware what problems this representation would create.

"The matter was so straightforward. No one could understand why this was such an issue. I was fourteen at the time, had little guidance and signed papers that were not safe. I went along on a holiday because my older brother was playing there. Before the match, I was told by Soccer Australia that it would be fine, but then it backfired, and no one knew that it would go this far" he said.

The eligibility issue manifested itself when Cahill was selected to represent Australia at the Under 23s level for a match in Tunisia. It was at this stage that he realised that FIFA rules stipulate that a player may



only represent one nation. Cahill described this moment as the lowest point in his career.

"It's been most frustrating. On the one hand I was selected for Australia, which was the highest point in my career, and then I was brought into the office and told that I was ineligible. We have a great team on the way, and I just wanted to be part of the squad" he said.

Tim Cahill's record for English First Division club, Millwall, had impressed a host of national associations, including the Republic of Ireland, Scotland and England, who had offered to use their considerable power to assist the Australian born midfielder in return for securing his playing services.

"I spoke to Farina two days before the England game and told him straight out that my heart was with the green and gold. It was a great accolade to be told that he wanted me as an Australian player" he said.

Cahill has just completed his sixth season at the English club. After a turbulent year in which he sustained a cruciate ligament injury to his left knee which kept him out for much of the campaign, he returned to score three goals in four matches.

With fifty goals in 200 appearances, Cahill has become a valuable asset to the team and it is only a matter of time, it seems, before he is snapped up by a Premier League club.

Millwall are likely to cash in on the goalscoring midfielder, with rumours persisting that he will be sold to a club in London or Birmingham.

For a player who has never figured as an 'Australian' in the official Soccer Australia list of players overseas, this positive decision from FIFA and a transfer to a bigger English club will expose the dynamic talent that is Tim Cahill.

"I think that I've proven myself by becoming an established footballer in Europe. Nothing is going to stop me" he said.

He will use the off-season to maintain fitness after returning to Sydney from a holiday with his young family.

The next step is to become entrenched in the Socceroo set up.

"The biggest thing at the moment is getting into the squad. Hopefully this can be quick and fast, and I want to be consistent and develop into a good footballer. I'm not a so called 'glory boy' and I love to provide goals as well as score. The team comes first."

"I'm happy with the rule change, and I'm thankful for all the parties that pushed my case. The decision is a major part of my football career and I hope that no one else finds themselves in my position" he said.

BILL TURNER CUP/TROPHY RESULTS



BOYS

Round 1: Blaxland 4 Colo 0, Emmaus 9 Mamre Christian 0, William Clarke College 8 Kellyville 0, St Leos College 4 Galston 1, Manly Campus 2-3 Killarney Heights 2-2, Arthur Phillip 9 Northmead 1, Granville South 6 Seven Hills 0, Heathcote 3 Cronulla 0, Kingsgrove 7 Gymea 2, St Spyridons College 4 Moriah College 1, Prairiewood 1 Fairfield 0, Cecil Hills 2 Bonnyrigg 1, Ambarvale 6 Airds 4, Coffs Harbour 1 Woolgoolga 0, Catherine McAuley 3 Grafton 1, South Grafton 3 Maclean 1, Bishop Druitt 5 John Paul Coffs Harbour 0, Macksville 5 Dorrigo 1, Orara 8 Nambucca Heads 0, St Paul Port Macquarie 1 Wauchope 0, Port Macquarie 4 Kempsey 0, St Josephs Port Macquarie 3 Westport 0, St Pauls Kempsey 8 Heritage Christian 0, Chatham 4 Camden Haven 3, St Clare Taresh 9 Budaoehlan Central 0, Merewether 1 St Pius X Adamstown 0, Karabar 7 Brindabella Christian 0, Narooma 9 Bega Valley Christian 1, Albion Park 2 Kanahooaka 1, Nowra 3 Bomaderry 2, Corrimal 5 Wollongong 2, Vincentia 7 Bowral 1, Picton 5 Moss Vale 0, Illawarra Sports 1 Dapto 0, Keira 4 Figtree 0.

Round 2: Hills Sports 4 Greystanes 1, Chris Bros Lewisham 3 DLS Ashfield 1, Belmore Boys 2

GIRLS

Round 1: Bede Polding College 5 Hawkesbury 2, The Forest 1 Barrenjoey 0, William Clarke College 2 Asquith Girls 1, Galston 7 Kellyville 0, Woolooware 4 St John Bosco 2, Penshurst Girls 3 All Saints Lakemba 0, Blakehurst 5 St George Girls 1, Jannali 1-3 Sylvania 1-1, Bossley Park 7 Liverpool Girls 0, Robert Townson 8 Thomas Reddall 0, St Johns Woodlawn 3 Casino 1, Kingscliff 3 Wollumbin 2, Emmanuel Anglican 6, Southern Cross 4, Xavier Lennox Head 7 Byron Bay 1, Macksville 5 Nambucca Head 1, Bishop Druitt 1 Woolgoolga 0, Camden Haven 1 St Pauls Kempsey 0, Kotara 4 Macquarie College 0, Terrigal 7 TLC Tumbi Umbi 1 TLC Berkeley Vale 3 St Peters Tuggerah Lakes 0, Corrimal 2 Illawarra Grammar 1, Moruya 5 Carroll College 2.

Round 2: St Clair 7 Caroline Chisholm 1, Hills Sports 3 Greystanes 1, Freeman Catholic 4 Miller 3, Prairiewood 6 James Busby 1, Lismore 3 St Marys Casino 0, Bellingen 3 Dorrigo 1, Mudgee 3 St Johns Dubbo 1, Delroy 3 Peak Hill Central 2 Orange 1-5 James Sheehan 1-4 Barham 1 Hay 0.

Negus On The Crawford Report



By Daniela Raco

least an hour with them. He has also been in touch with business mogul Frank Lowy and has arranged a meeting with him ahead of the next stakeholders meeting to have a chat and share the experiences of the Board. They have already spoken about how important the constitutional changes that the Report suggests are in the overall scheme of things.

It's been a busy nine months in Australian Soccer since the last time I spoke to Mr Negus. Issues raised in our first meeting, way back then, have evidently re-surfaced ... or perhaps never really went away. I expect this interview will again "stir the possum".

NEGUS: on the Crawford Report.

"Crawford missed the point completely" Negus said. "Crawford was asked amongst other things to look at the structure of the game, and he hasn't. I can't see anything different other than the so-called constitutional changes which change the voting power of the stakeholders.

Crawford was asked amongst other things to look at the structure of the game, and he hasn't. I can't see anything different other than the so-called constitutional changes which change the voting power of the stakeholders.

ing changes in the way the sport is governed in Australia. Crawford can make only recommendations; a 75% majority is needed to vote in the changes. Acting in the best interests of the game, former Soccer Australia director GEORGE NEGUS gave evidence at the Crawford Enquiry not long before the release of exhaustive report. He called and volunteered to talk to them as a former Board Member and spent at

"They're all people with allegiances to States, or people who have relied upon State votes to get to where they've got. The States are still calling the shots where Australian soccer is concerned, if not entirely, then in a very significant way".

"If these people who refuse to resign have the interests of Australian soccer at heart, I'm baffled about how they can say that is the case. All they are interested in is maintaining their position of totally illegitimate power.

They are not looking at the big picture. Why does the board of Soccer Australia's exist for? It doesn't exist to protect the interests of the State Federations or the clubs; it exists to protect and promote the interest of Australian Soccer.

"There are three key areas of Australian Soccer, the Socceroos, and the National League and there's everybody else. At the moment there is hardly any connection between the three. The National League needs to be closer to the games players and supporters, not further away. As much as they'd like to run it like a

"This should not be seen as a criticism. It is recognizing what it is that is stopping us from progressing. There are two ways you can go: Plan A - By abolishing the State Federations and replace those Federations with sensible regions (country and city), and they then become the regions of Soccer Australia administered in their own right.

You then make some sort of LINK between all the players and supporters out there and a National League that doesn't exist.

Plan B - If people are not prepared to bite the bullet and abolish the State Federations, make the State Federations divisions of Soccer Australia and then divide up the States into regions and have the State Federations as divisions of Soccer Australia responsible for whatever National League clubs are in their State so that the people running the game and the people playing the game at the top level are linked.

It is because this link doesn't exist that we can't attract the numbers to games, and we can't attract money in the game through sponsorships.



Frank Lowy (Left) & John Singleton (Right) have been sanctioned as possible saviours of the Australian soccer game.

important points. What is disappointing is that he got it right with Aussie Rules, and now they're all club mad. The game's strength is in its numbers.

Until such time that the hun-

dreds of thousands of young people that play the game and support it in this country can name at least half the National League teams then nothing has changed. That's the test.

'THE GENERAL' HANGS UP THE BOOTS

By Mark Stavroulakis

Having played 255 National League games for the Canberra Cosmos and Newcastle Breakers, veteran defender Andy Roberts decided that this was to be his last season as a professional footballer with Newcastle United.

The 33-year-old ended his playing career last week when Newcastle defeated Perth Glory one-nil where Roberts played the final 20 minutes of the match to end a fabulous innings in the National League.

Known for his no nonsense defending, the former AIS graduate was certainly one not to mess with on the pitch.

'The General' as he was referred to by the players at Newcastle played a commanding role in steering United's defence in the past few seasons.

Injuries halted his progression towards further achieving more out of the game however his passion and spirit for the game was highly evident in more ways than one.

"My longevity in the game is something I am very proud of and 12 years and 255 games is a record I will look back on and feel I have really achieved something, especially when you consider the average number of games for a player in the NSL is only about 50." Roberts stated in the United match-day program.

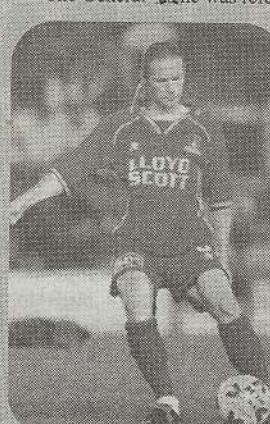
Born and bred in Newcastle, Roberts' greatest memory was captaining United in its first season in the National League.

"I am extremely proud of being club captain at Newcastle United, however being born and bred in Newcastle taking the field as captain was a dream come true".

At this point in time, Roberts has been asked by almost every local side in the Newcastle area for his assistance in playing and coaching but has already embarked on working on a business venture with wife Marguerite.

"My wife and I have just purchased Gentleman's Outfitters at Charlestown, a business I have been associated with since 1990 and we'll be working hard to make a success of it. I will continue to be involved in football in some way however, I just haven't decided how yet".

Whatever Andy does in the near future, rest assured, his presence as a swashbuckling defender will be missed on the pitches of Energy Australia Stadium – but don't count out a comeback, the famous pony tailed assassin could well make an appearance once more!



Andy Roberts shown in action with the Newcastle Breakers.

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George Negus believes the Crawford Report did not help in the game's progression towards the top.

Kiwis confident of Confederations Cup

New Zealand midfielder Mark Burton is convinced the All Whites can reach the semifinals of next month's Confederations Cup.

The Football Kingz play-maker told NZPA, "There's no point in packing a suitcase if we're not ambitious. "The last time, we were just really happy to be there. We didn't get a win or a draw, and this time we're looking to get at least that."

The All Whites face Scotland next Tuesday in Edinburgh before playing the USA on June 8 and a France XI June 13. They open their Confederations Cup campaign against Japan in Paris on June 18. Burton is a veteran of NZ's last Confederations Cup in Mexico and

said, "It was an amazing trip and probably the biggest thing I took out of it was the pressure before games.

"You run out in front of 50,000-plus, which can be intimidating. Hopefully, having had some of that experience behind me, I can use it for these games coming up."

New Zealand qualified for the Confederations Cup after their eventful win over the Socceroos last year that condemned the Aussies to one of their worst defeats in the history of soccer in this country.

Since then, New Zealand has been on a high with football and from reports will look to strengthen the sport in the coming season.



Soccer continues to rise in popularity in Australia

Australian soccer continues to surge in popularity amongst the Australian public across a range of key indicators on all measures of interest* - participation, attendance, television viewing, radio listening and print media readership - registering record levels of interest according to the 16th annual Sweeney Sports Report.

The report found that the increased interest in soccer in Australia surged following last year's FIFA World Cup in Korea/Japan and on top of the recent decision by FIFA to award the Oceania region with a direct qualification spot in the 2006 FIFA World Cup in Germany - in addition to the Sweeney Sports Report having recorded an 'almost continual

increase' in soccer's popularity since 1988/1989.

The Sweeney Sports Report found that only one sport - soccer - recorded a substantial increase in interest compared with the summer of 2001/2002, whilst in participation levels soccer was one of 'two sports to have attracted the largest increase'.

Soccer Australian acting Chief Executive Stefan Kamasz was extremely pleased with the findings, highlighting the continued growth of the sport across a range of important 'indicators'.

"Soccer Australia is delighted that our sport continues to receive increasing levels of recognition within Australia, especially across the range of the five key indicators outlined in the Sweeney Sports

Report released today.

"Much of the acclaim for improvement should go to our State Federations and their member associations and clubs, who work tirelessly to improve the game at all levels. We hope that this research data translates to further improved coverage of our game across the board.

"With the Qantas Socceroos about to embark on further international matches and their World Cup qualification matches next year, and our Qantas Matildas, Qantas Young Socceroos (Under-20's) and Qantas Joeys (Under-17's) all involved in FIFA World Cup finals this year, Soccer Australia anticipates further important growth in years to come," said Mr Kamasz.

Ante Kovacevic: His future with the Force is under a cloud after the club refused to renew the skipper's contract.

By Allan Crisp

Ante Kovacevic is the latest in a long list of Adelaide City players forced to leave the club amid acrimonious circumstances.

Club captain, Kovacevic was in his third season with South Australia's most successful club and looking forward to renewing his contract for a fourth term.

The former Melbourne Knights championship winning player made no secret of the fact that he and his wife are happy with the Adelaide lifestyle and have bought a house here.

But his future plans were wrecked

when Kovacevic was called to a mid-week meeting with City president Bob D'Ottavi to be told that his contract would not be renewed for next season.

That was just days before the vital finals qualification game against Parramatta Power and two matches from the end of the 10-match NSL finals campaign.

The timing was incredibly shocking and the reason given by the president was equally difficult to comprehend.

"The initial reason given to me was that with two games to go the club wanted to try new players, so the club would cut the ties with me to give me time to look for another club," Kovacevic said.

"That didn't make sense because my contract was up for renewal and I was free to negotiate anyway."

D'Ottavi then told Kovacevic he intended to cut the player's budget for next year and that Kovacevic was in the highest paid brackets allocated to players.

"I then suggested to Bob that he would be unlikely to change his mind if I were to offer to play for \$10,000 for the whole of next season.

"He then admitted that the reason he was cutting me was because of my behaviour the previous day when at a meeting with union officials I objected on behalf of the players about late player payments."

D'Ottavi told the "Adelaide Advertiser" he had delayed payments as a method to motivate the players to improve performances.

"The purpose of delaying it (payments) was to motivate the players," D'Ottavi said.

"The club has got no money, I'm the fellow who's injecting money to pay the players and the clubs debts."

At the time of the delayed payments to players Adelaide City had just won two of its three successive away games, a triumphant run that could not be construed as poor results.

"I was told that I was too vocal about player issues and that is obviously the problem," Kovacevic said.

"I would like to honour my end of my contract and fulfil all of my obligations. I've been with the club for three years and I don't want to end with two weeks of the season remaining."

In the latest discussions with his club president, Kovacevic said he would accept a pay-out to leave Adelaide City, but asked for the final two games, that he was not selected to play, to be included in the agreement.

This was refused, but Kovacevic has continued to present himself at all training sessions.

As captain, Kovacevic is obligated to be the link between management and the players and it is his duty to air any grievance to the top brass.

As for suggestions that the Adelaide City players did not perform to the best of their abilities, try telling that to the opposition and their respective coaches.

This latest unsavoury affair has heaped further derision on the Adelaide City club from the general public and even some of its loyal supporters.

A radio talk back listener summarised the situation adequately with this comment "I will continue to support the team, but not the club."

QANTAS MATILDAS CONTINUE WORLD CUP PREPARATIONS AT AIS CAMP

The Qantas Matildas arrived in Canberra on Sunday for an Australian Institute of Sport training camp, their first assembly since qualifying for the 2003 FIFA Women's World Cup.

Twenty-two players are in attendance at the 10-day AIS Training Camp, the group comprised of the current AIS scholarship athletes (the Australian-based Qantas Matildas), plus four invited players.

Midfielder Taryn Rockall, the only non-AIS player to be selected for last month's OFC Women's World Cup Qualifying Tournament, has since been awarded an AIS scholarship.

Three of the four players invited to the camp - Caitlin Muñoz, Amber Neilson, and Karla Reuter - are aiming to make the step up to senior international foot-

ball after competing at the 2002 FIFA U19 Women's World Championship. Goalkeeper Amy Beattie hopes to break through for her first ever national team selection.

The camp is the next step towards the Women's World Cup, but AIS/National Coach Adrian Santrac's plans for the Qantas Matildas' further preparations may need to be reviewed, once the new location and exact timing of the event are announced. "Our plans could well need to change dramatically," he said.

Early this month, FIFA made the decision to relocate the Women's World Cup to another country.

China was to have hosted the event from 23 September to 11 October this year. FIFA's decision on the new host nation is still pending.

Santrac has therefore impressed on the players the significance of this camp in terms of selections for the Women's World Cup.

"This camp is enormously important for these players to present themselves at their best, as it may be the last opportunity for them to leave their most favourable impression previous to the final selections of the World Cup squad," said Santrac. "The importance can't be understated, and the players are aware of the significance."

Adrian Santrac

AIS TRAINING CAMP 25 May - 4 June 2003

AIS Scholarship Athletes (18)	Program	Hometown	Pos	DOB	Caps
Melissa BARBIERI	AIS / VIS	Melbourne	GK	20/01/80	7
Hayley CRAWFORD	AIS	Newcastle	F	27/03/84	4
Rhian DAVIES	AIS / ACTAS	Sydney	D	05/01/81	17
Bryony DUUS	AIS / QAS	Brisbane	M	07/10/77	37
Gill FOSTER	AIS / ACTAS	Sydney	M	28/08/76	15
Heather GARROCK	AIS / QAS	Sydney	M	21/12/82	35
Pam GRANT	AIS / QAS	Rockhampton	D	15/11/82	4
Peita-Claire HEPPERLIN	AIS / ACTAS	Canberra	M	24/12/81	19
Olivia HOHNKE	AIS / QAS	Toowoomba	M	08/08/78	8
Tal KARP	AIS / ACTAS	Perth	M	30/12/81	10
Cassandra KELL	AIS	Central Coast	GK	08/08/80	7
April MANN	AIS / QAS	Brisbane	F	21/04/78	17
Claire NICHOLS	AIS / QAS	Brisbane	GK	08/07/75	19
Taryn ROCKALL	AIS	Sydney	M	11/11/77	6
Thea SLATYER	AIS	Sydney	D	02/02/83	11
Danielle SMALL	AIS	Newcastle	F	07/02/79	16
Sacha WAINWRIGHT	AIS / ACTAS	Canberra	D/M	06/02/72	49
Amy WILSON	AIS / ACTAS	Canberra	F	09/06/80	36
<i>Invited Players (4):</i>					
Amy BEATTIE	ACTAS	Canberra	GK	08/09/80	-
Caitlin MUÑOZ	ACTAS	Canberra	F	04/10/83	-
Amber NEILSON	QAS	Newcastle	M	14/12/84	-
Karla REUTER	QAS	Toowoomba	D	14/06/84	-

Scarsella: It will be 36



Basil Scarsella: OFC President believes 36 teams will compete in the next World Cup in 2006.

Oceania Football Confederation (OFC) president Basil Scarsella believes it is a "foregone conclusion" that FIFA's Executive will agree to South American Football Confederation's (CONMEBOL) proposal to increase the number of teams for the 2006 World Cup in Germany from 32 to 36.

Speaking on SBS TV's The World Game, Scarsella confirmed that the proposal was gaining momentum despite FIFA president Sepp Blatter publicly stating that he was against the move.

"The executive of FIFA has agreed in principle to an increase from 32 to 36 teams, subject to finding a system that can take us to the 36 teams," he said.

"The final decision is going to be made on June 28 when the FIFA executive meets again in Paris, which coincides with the Confederations Cup. A final decision is yet to be made but at this stage it certainly is looking as though we are going to have 36 teams in Germany 2006."

"From an organising perspective, Germany is in a position to cater for 36 teams. So that is not an issue. It's really what system do we use to go from 36 teams down to 16."

Scarsella did point out that the "logistical exercise is very difficult and complex" and that some key issues need to be addressed.

"You have got television contracts that need to be catered for and a whole lot of commercial contracts that have been entered into for 32 teams."

The 36-team idea was put forward in March after CONMEBOL, home of defending champion Brazil, lost half a qualifying place to Oceania.

Under the new format, European Football Confederation (UEFA) would gain two more places while CONMEBOL would get one extra spot with Asian Football Confederation (AFC) and North and Central America Football Confederation (CONCACAF) receiving an extra half spot.

Scarsella explained that four of the six confederations, not surprisingly the ones with most to benefit,

are fully supportive of the four-team increase.

"I tried to argue that Oceania should have two spots but I didn't get very far," he joked.

"With Oceania getting one spot, South America lost one in effect so my position and Oceania's position is somewhat indifferent but overall we would be supporting the increase from 32 to 36."

"When you have Europe voting for it, because they get two extra spots, South America voting for it because they get one and Asia and CONCACAF also supporting it because they get half each, more than they have got today, I think it's a foregone conclusion."

Europe's elite clubs, in particular those of the G-14, have long argued that they are disadvantaged by having to release players for national team duty for friendlies and tournaments such as the Confederations Cup.

But Scarsella rejects any suggestion that an increase to 36 teams would have any effect on clubs.

"I think the G14 will always have something to say when it relates to national teams but the reality is that four additional nations is not going to make much of a difference. I don't think it's a big issue."

Scarsella scoffed at suggestions that G14 clubs should be eligible for a share of World Cup revenue for use of "their" players.

"I wouldn't hold my breath for that to happen. I think the clubs sometimes forget that the players get exposure from playing in World Cups," Scarsella said.

"That is where they are on the world stage and a lot of players have in fact made their name by playing in FIFA competitions. For them to be asking for 20% of the proceeds I think is a big risk. I don't expect the

clubs to get a share of the proceedings from the World Cup."

With FIFA agreeing to a rotation policy for the hosting of future World Cups, Australia seems the only real candidate should Oceania be granted the honour in 2018.

"The bid needs to come from a country and certainly when it comes to Oceania it can only come from Australia or possibly a combined bid between Australia and New Zealand," Scarsella stated.

"From an Oceania perspective we are very keen for that to happen for 2018. By that stage we are due to have the World Cup in this part of the world under the rotation policy that FIFA has agreed."

"In 2018 Oceania would still be the only confederation not to have had hosted a World Cup and I think it's about time we did. And we would be arguing very strongly for and would be very supportive of Australia in any bid," Scarsella added.

"To organise an event such as the World Cup the Federal Government must be involved as do all the State Governments and Soccer Australia. They are the three parties that have to come together in a coordinated fashion to ensure that what is the biggest sporting event actually happens. But there is no doubt that Australia can do it."

In matters closer to home, the former Soccer Australia chairman believes that the latest saga involving the administration of the game in Australia must be resolved immediately for the good of the game.

"I think the quicker the whole issue is resolved by the stakeholders then the better it will be for the game. There is no question about that."

Jobless Phillips to walk away from NSL

National Soccer League premiership-winning coach Gary Phillips is set to quit the game after failing to secure a post for next season.

Phillips, who guided Olympic to the title last season in his first year at the helm, was dumped by the club this year after falling out with several board members.

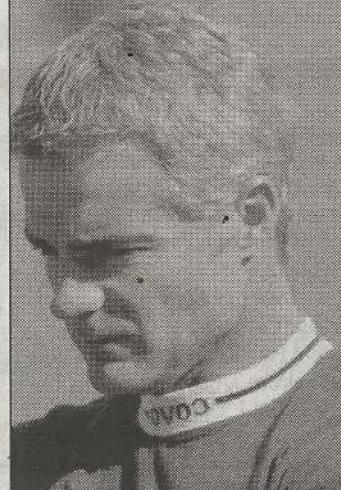
The former Tonga national coach missed out on the Marconi job for 2003/04 and has heard nothing about his application to replace John Kosmina at the Brisbane Strikers and says he's now likely to pack it in.

"I turn 40 in a couple of weeks so now is the time for a career change," Phillips said.

"I've had 16 years as a player and seven or eight as a fulltime coach and I don't want to be going through these kind of insecurities for the next 20 years or so."

"If I can't get a job after the last couple of years and my record I'll never get a job."

Phillips said he was disappointed that the Strikers had encouraged him to apply for the position three months ago but hadn't given him an indication of where he stood.



Former Sharks coach Gary Phillips has pondered on moving on from the National League after failing to land a job in the NSL.

"Nobody seems to know what they are doing but I'm led to believe from my sources that Luciano Trani, the assistant coach at the Melbourne Knights, is the favourite," Phillips said.

Phillips was initially contemplating a move to Asia after his shock axing from the Sharks but said with the SARS outbreak and the war in Iraq it was no longer an option.

OFC CONFIRMS 2006 WORLD CUP QUALIFYING DATES

The OFC Executive Committee yesterday agreed on the dates for the 2006 FIFA World Cup Stage Two Preliminary Competition home and away qualifying series.

The chosen playoff FIFA fixed double-dates are as follows:

2004: 4/8 September.
2005: 26/30 March, 4/8 June, 3/7 September, 12/16 November.

The abovementioned dates are subject to change depending on the FIFA Confederations Cup in 2005 being held.



All six teams in Stage Two of the Preliminary Competition will play home and away matches on each of the abovementioned dates. Each team will therefore play a total of five home and five away matches.

Australia and New Zealand are the seeded teams for Stage Two with the other four teams to be decided at a Stage One Preliminary Competition to be held in mid-2004. The dates for this competition have yet to be confirmed.



Adelaide City Force President Bob D'Ottavi.

ADELAIDE HOLDS BACK WAGES

Adelaide City president Bob D'Ottavi firmly believed the lure of a national soccer league grand final berth was not enough motivation for his players — so he withheld their wages as well.

The bizarre decision two weeks ago has unsettled the Force's finals campaign and led to the axing of captain Ante Kovacevic.

D'Ottavi happily admitted that he held back players' wages for five days so they would "play better" in the round eight finals match against Perth.

Adelaide City coach Zoran Matic told reporters on Sunday that the absent Kovacevic was injured but the defender admitted that was a story they'd concocted for team harmony.

"We decided that was the story we were going to go with so we didn't interrupt the team's preparation for the game on the weekend," Kovacevic said.

Instead the former Melbourne Knights player said he was let go by the club because he had complained about unpaid superannuation earlier in the year and then more recently about the withheld

wages.

"The board called me in to say they wanted to cut all ties," Kovacevic said.

"I asked (Bob) to be honest with me and he said it was about my behaviour this year."

"All the boys had concerns and they were coming up to me (about not being paid)."

"When I spoke to Bob he said: 'I told you that I wasn't going to pay you till the end of the finals'. He said if the boys have got problems chasing bills or mortgages that's not his problem."

D'Ottavi has stood by the decision.

"The purpose of delaying it was to motivate the players," he said.

"The club has got no money, I'm the fellas who's injecting money to pay the players and the club's debts."

"They put a lot of effort into that game so I deposited the money the next Monday - so what's the problem?"

Kovacevic is currently working with the Professional Footballers' Association to determine his options.



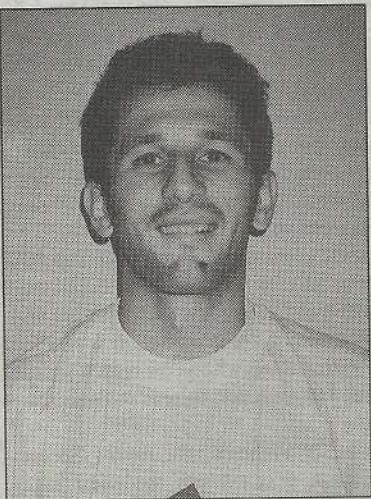
OFF THE CROSSBAR

By Allan Crisp

MAGICAL MILAN NOW AN AMATEUR

It must rank as the most powerful Third Division Amateur League team ever to grace the turf of the pitch on the corner of Devitt Avenue and Portrush Road, Payneham.

Any unsuspecting person wandering past the venue last Sunday any person that is who had even a passing interest in soccer would have rubbed their eyes in disbelief.



Milan Ivanovic: Adelaide City legend has donned the boots once more with an SA amateur side.

For there wearing the colours of the Adelaide Villa team, playing against Payneham United were, Milan Ivanovic, Paul Simmons, Rick DeRosa, Angie DiTrioia, Tony Vello, David Scalzi and Danny Widera.

Yes! The one and only Milan Ivanovic, former Red Star Belgrade, Adelaide City and Socceroo superstar, playing alongside ex-SA State team captain Paul Simmons and the aforementioned ex-Premier League stars.

And, slapping the icing on the Villa cake was coach Luci Signore, himself a former Adelaide City NSL player.

OCEANIA PRESIDENT HONOURED

Basil Scarsella has been honoured by the Campbelltown City Soccer Club, which will celebrate its 40th Anniversary

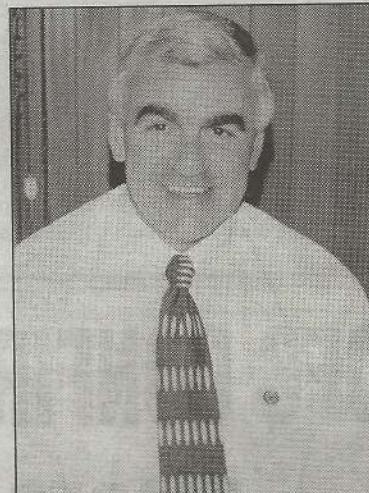
season by naming its Best Player Award after the Oceania Confederation President.

In the past the club has not named its annual award, accordingly and on the occasion of the 40th Anniversary it was decided that the award would be named after a former player who had made an exemplary contribution to the club.

Campbelltown chairman Panfilo Cicciocippo said the club was very honoured and proud that Basil Scarsella had consented to the use of his name for the medal.

With over 30 years of playing and administrative service to the sport, Basil Scarsella (a former first team goalkeeper) is a Player Life Member of the club and also a Life Member of Soccer Australia and the South Australian Soccer Federation.

"He made a significant contribution to the clubs administration for many years before serving the sport with great distinction at all other levels of its executive management," Mr Cicciocippo said.



Basil Scarsella was honoured by the Campbelltown City Soccer Club last week.

Currently a member of FIFA's Executive Committee, Scarsella also is President of the Oceania International Confederation. He also held the office of Chairman of Soccer Australia and Vice Chairman of the SASF.

Clearly, he epitomizes the culture of the club and represents the vision of the founders and its many volunteers over the years, from playing and offering his services at all levels to being a member of the sports world governing body.

The Campbelltown City 40th Anniversary Celebratory Dinner will be held at the club (Newton Sports Field Stradbroke Road, Newton) on June 28.

RED DEVILS WIN

Campbelltown Red Devils are the only State League survivors to contest the Federation Cup semi-finals on Monday, June 9.

The Reds squeezed into the semis after a 1-0 win over supercharged Adelaide Galaxy on the Adelaide Cup Day holiday.

Olympic FC advanced with a 2-0 away win over the Cumberland Foxes, courtesy of a John Spatharos brace at Bailey Reserve.

Tearaway Premier League leaders the MetroStars maintained the status quo with a regimental 3-0 victory over Northern Demons at the TK Shutter Reserve, Klemzig.

FEDERATION CUP

QUARTER-FINALS

Campbelltown City 1, Galaxy 0.
Olympic FC 2, Cumberland Foxes 0.
MetroStars 3, Northern Demons 0.
Raiders 2, Salisbury United 0.

Under 23 Cup

White City 3, Para Hills Knights 2.
Blue Eagles 4, Olympic FC 0.
Raiders 2, Hills Hawks 1.
Playford Patriots 1, Panthers 0.

Under 19 Cup

Adelaide City 2, White City 0.
Playford Patriots 2, Panthers 1.
Enfield Falcons 7, Salisbury Utd 0.
Cumberland Utd 1, Croydon Kings 0.

Apart from the win, Metro coach Michael Barnett was pleased that his long time injury victim Frank Sergi was able to make a successful comeback appearance, which he underlined with a goal.

Gallant Salisbury United hosted but lost to Raiders at Steve Jarvis Park as Michael Petillo and his band called the tune with a goal in each half.

The draw for the Federation Cup semi-finals will be made at a SASF Chairman's meeting tonight (Wednesday, May 28).

RED DEVILS



SA PREMIER LEAGUE RESULTS ROUND 12

ADELAIDE GALAXY	0
METRO STARS	1
CROYDON KINGS	2
OLYMPIC F.C.	3
PLAYFORD PATRIOTS	0
ADELAIDE BLUE EAGLES	3
RAIDERS	2
MODBURY	0
WHITE CITY WARRIORS	0
ADELAIDE CITY	1

FIRST DIVISION

ADELAIDE COBRAS	1
PIRATES	3
CAMPBELLTOWN CITY	1
WESTERN STRIKERS	1
NORTHERN DEMONS	1
NOARLUNGA UNITED	3
PANTHERS	2
ADELAIDE HILLS	2
SALISBURY UNITED	0
CUMBERLAND UNITED	2
SEAFORD	4
PORT PIRIE CITY	2

METRO STARS	12 12 0 0 36 11 25 36
RAIDERS	12 10 1 1 26 11 15 31
ADELAIDE CITY	12 6 2 4 21 16 5 20
ADELAIDE BLUE EAGLES	12 5 2 5 11 15 4 17
WHITE CITY WARRIORS	12 5 1 6 21 17 4 16
ENFIELD CITY	11 4 3 4 21 21 0 15
OLYMPIC F.C.	12 4 3 5 25 29 4 15
ADELAIDE GALAXY	12 3 3 6 14 17 3 12
MODBURY	12 4 0 8 11 19 8 12
CROYDON KINGS	12 3 2 7 17 26 9 11
PARA HILLS KNIGHTS	11 3 1 7 18 25 7 10
PLAYFORD PATRIOTS	12 2 2 8 17 31 14 8

FIRST DIVISION

CAMPBELLTOWN CITY	12 10 2 0 47 7 40 32
CUMBERLAND UNITED	12 9 2 1 31 10 21 29
PIRATES	12 9 0 3 39 21 18 27
NOARLUNGA UNITED	12 7 2 3 30 16 14 23
PANTHERS	12 6 1 5 29 24 5 19
ADELAIDE COBRAS	12 5 1 6 24 23 1 16
ADELAIDE HILLS	12 4 4 4 21 21 0 16
NORTHERN DEMONS	12 3 3 6 23 29 6 12
WESTERN STRIKERS	12 2 3 7 14 22 8 9
SEAFORD	12 2 3 7 12 45 33 9
SALISBURY UNITED	12 2 2 8 15 32 17 8
PORT PIRIE CITY	12 1 1 10 17 52 35 4

THE BLOCK SAYS:

What started I believe as a good idea has quickly turned into chaos.

The introduction of the ten-week final series I must admit was greeted with a great sense of optimism.

However over the course of a little over two months, we have seen that the six sides currently fighting it out, albeit with the exception of the Perth Glory are nowhere near championship winning material.

Perth has shown how far ahead the West is when it comes to producing consistently high football. But more than that, the Glory under the guidance of Mich D'Avray has adopted a playing style that accommodates their conditions and their opposition.

And no where did we see a clearer indication of this then in their 6-1 humbling of the Parramatta Power. After

losing the first leg two one to Nick T's side, the return leg in Perth was a far different. What made it more remarkable was the fact the home side actually trailed by a goal and only went into half time having equalised.

However in a true indication that the Glory are champions-elect, a five goal second half stunned the Power into oblivion.

As for the other 'thoroughbred' locked in a battle to claim second spot, their form to say the least has been very disappointing.

The Olympic Sharks were given the boost of a six point head start over four of the sides, yet after five losses from nine games are locked in a battle with the fifth place Adelaide City Force to claim second.

Olympic should have assured their passage into the GF an age ago, but sadly are playing a brand of football

hopelessly inferior to their competitors. Against Newcastle- a side previously winless in this final's campaigns the Sharks were beaten and beaten convincingly by a bunch of youngsters, filling in for their more experienced teammates.

And I am not just arguing this point of view with base evidence, but once again I say, five losses from nine games and the Sharks should have been a spent force.

But the Sharks will show for their second successive grand final and who knows maybe steal the prize once again. Nevertheless if in life three times is a charm the Glory will win the day and not just because they have been unfortunate on two separate occasions. Rather they will win the title, because they DESERVE to win it.

ROUND 14

Sat 24 May, 3:00pm

Bentleigh Greens SC 3 St Albans Saints SC 2
(Nilo J, Ostrowski D, Own Goal)

Sun 25 May, 3:00pm

Preston Lions SC 2 Frankston Pines SC 2
(Trpevski V, Neceski T)
Altona East Phoenix SC 3 Port Melbourne Sharks SC 0
(Antoniadis R, Genovesi D, Kelic A)

Essendon Royals SC 3 Fawkner Blues SC 1
(Simsek K (2), Chillico R)

Sun 25 May, 6:00pm

Green Gully Cavaliers SC 2 Bulleen Zebras SC 0
(Magnacca A, Vargas A)

P W D L F A PT

ROUND 15						
Fr 30 May, 8:15 PM						
Port Melb Sharks SC vs. Preston Lions SC						
Sun, 1 Jun, 3:00 PM						
Frankston Pines SC vs. Bentleigh Greens SC						
Altona Magic SC vs. Green Gully Cavaliers SC						
St Albans Saints SC vs. Essendon Royals SC						
Fawkner Blues SC vs. Whittlesea Stallions SC						
Mon, 2 Jun, 8:15 PM						
Bulleen Zebras SC vs. Altona East Phoenix SC						



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Premier League Round 12 By Glenn Davis

PINE RIVERS DEFEAT OLD RIVALS

Japanese striker Kouji Kanagawa is expected to miss the remainder of the Brisbane premier league season after breaking an ankle in Pine Rivers' 2-1 win over North Star in their local derby clash on Saturday night.

Pine Rivers led 1-nil at half time after Darren Bender scored in the 20th minute before Kanagawa was badly injured when he bravely toe poked home the winning goal midway through the second half.

"It was a horrific night and we didn't feel like celebrating after the win," said coach Clayton Koch.

Kanagawa snapped his left ankle when

hit in a tackle and was writhing in agony after he beat a North Star defender to the ball for the winning goal.

Kanagawa has been an integral part of Pine Rivers' success this season scoring nine goals to be among the leagues leading scorers.

Pine Rivers moved back into the top four with a 5-3 win over Wynnum after a mini form slump last round and now sit second after the derby victory over North Star.

Kanagawa, 25, came to Australia last year and initially began training with Rochedale before Koch spotted him and

enticed him over to Pine Rivers.

"Koji came here on a holiday last year and started training with Rochedale," Koch said.

"I used to play for Rochedale and went and watched them one day and saw him kicking a ball and that's how we got to know him."

"Because he was on holidays he wasn't allowed to play in the national league or for a state league side but he could play at any level below that so he joined us in first division last year."

"He's a great player and has scored nine goals for us so we're going to miss him in the second round."

"He's been losing money staying in this country trying to make a name for himself so he can play in the national league."

Queensland Lions already have made approaches to him to join the club if they are re-admitted to the national league.

Koch was delighted with Pine Rivers' victory although it was soured by Kanagawa's ankle break.

"It was more comfortable than it looked on paper," Koch said.

"Darren (Bender) scored the first goal but he could have had four of five."

"It was a solid performance clouded by Koji's injury."

Pine Rivers' jump into second place was the only change in the top five positions after second placed Taringa Rovers drew 1-all with Toowoomba while third placed Rochedale and fifth placed Brisbane City shared the points 1-all.

The big upset of the round came from wooden spooners The Gap who held sixth placed Wynnum to a nil-all draw at Carmichael Park.

Taringa's recent performances are starting to concern coach John Ogden.

"A draw against Toowoomba was a fair result but our consistency is a concern," Ogden said.

"We're not consistent enough. Our form away from home hasn't been as good as it should be but our home form is good."

"Consistency is a big thing this year the way the league is going."

"It's so tight any team in the league is capable of winning."

Taringa picked up the point after trailing 1-nil at half time following an own goal from Craig Slaughter.

However, Slaughter, who was involved in a defensive mix-up with Matt Bell for the own goal, went from villain to hero scoring from the penalty spot after Luke Morley was brought down with 15 minutes remaining.

"It was a cold night up at Toowoomba and it was a tough game," Ogden said.

"They're a very under-rated side and have only conceded nine goals this season and have the third best defence in the com-

petition."

Neither side had many scoring opportunities but Taringa possibly had the best when a Shane Unsworth header was cleared off the line by the Toowoomba defence.

Rochedale's point kept them level on the table with Taringa but behind on goal differences.

Brisbane City led 1-nil at the break following a Paul Armit header and looked set for three points until Rochedale's Steve Carter grabbed the equaliser with five minutes remaining.

Carter received the ball near the halfway and ran 20 metres at the City defence before striking a hard shot down low next to the upright.

Brisbane City coach Frank Pimblett believed a draw was a fair result.

Pimblett, one of Queensland's most loyal servants, is still waiting to hear whether his application for the vacant Brisbane Strikers' coaching role has been successful.

Pimblett played for many seasons for Queensland and in the national league with Brisbane United and Brisbane Strikers and would prove an ideal acquisition to replace John Kosmina.

Rochedale coach Keiran Cooper was content with the draw but disappointed to concede their goal off a set-piece.

"Set pieces have been our achilles heel all year. We're only a small side and we've been working a lot at training but we let another," Cooper said.

"It was an even game and a draw was fair result. If you had offered me a draw with Brisbane City at the start of the season I would have accepted it."

Wynnum coach Kevin Meacock was downcast after being held to a draw by strugglers The Gap whose only points this season came from a shock 3-1 win over Brisbane City in the opening round.

"We had ten to 12 really good chances

but couldn't score," Meacock said.

"Their keeper had an outstanding game and saved them many times including a header from Owen Filewood which he saved like Gordon Banks diving down low to the ground and tipping it over the crossbar."

Wynnum had a goal from Shane Coffey disallowed for offside and at least three clear chances to break the deadlock.

"It was a game we should have won but in the end we lost two points," Meacock said.

"We should have scored at least three or four but couldn't stick it in."

"To their credit The Gap defended very well and got bodies behind the ball."

"Every time we got possession in their half and looked up there were Gap players everywhere and they were committed."

Queensland Lions continued its march to the premiership with a five-nil thrashing at home over Ipswich Knights.

Lions led 2-nil after only eight minutes when Andrew Davidson got the home side off to a dream start in the 3rd minute before striker Matt Olly made it two five minutes later.

Greg Di Losa stretched Lions' lead to 3-nil lead in the 55th minute before Terry Hughes knocked home a penalty 15 minutes later while Di Losa notched a double in the 81st minute.

Palm Beach stayed seventh after a 2-1 win over Souths.

National league midfielder Peter Grierson tucked away a goal in each half to give the Gold Coast club maximum points and keep them in contention for the play offs.

"We played extremely well and dominated most of the game. We were well in control when we got to 2-nil up," said coach Bob Hamilton.

"But we lost our way in the last few minutes after we conceded off a corner."

Premier League 2003

As at Round: 11

	P	W	L	D	PTS
QLD LIONS	11	8	2	1	25
PINE RIVERS	11	7	4	0	21
TARINGA	11	6	3	2	20
ROCHEDALE	11	6	3	2	20
BRIS CITY	11	5	4	2	17
WYNNUM	11	5	4	2	17
PALM BEACH	11	5	5	1	16
TOOWOOMBA	11	3	4	4	13
SOUTHS	11	4	6	1	13
NORTH STAR	11	4	6	1	13
IPSWICH	11	2	6	3	9
THE GAP	11	1	9	1	4

Premier League: Pine Rivers 2 (Darren Bender, Kouji Kanagawa) d North Star 1 (Brad Hicks), Rochedale 1 (Steven Carter) v Brisbane City 1 (Paul Armit), Qld Lions 5 (Greg Dilosa 2, Terry Hughes, Andrew Davidson, Matt Olly) d Ipswich Knights 0, Toowoomba 1 (own goal) v Taringa 1 (Craig Slaughter), Palm Beach 2 (Peter Grierson 2) d Souths 1 (Ryan Bridge), Wynnum 0 v The Gap 0

First Division 2003

As at Round: 11

	P	W	L	D	PTS
CAPALABA	13	10	1	1	31
EASTERN SUBURBS	13	9	1	2	29
UNI OF QLD	13	8	3	1	25
BRISBANE OLYMPIC UTD	13	5	2	5	20
MITCHELTON	13	6	4	2	20
PENINSULA POWER	13	5	6	1	16
ROCKLEA UTD	13	4	5	3	15
ALBANY CREEK	13	4	6	2	14
INALA CITY	13	3	6	3	12
REDLANDS UTD	13	2	6	4	10
BEENLEIGH	13	2	7	3	9
MT GRAVATT	13	2	7	3	9
NEWMARKET	13	3	9	0	9

Results Round 13: Uni of Qld 2 Mitchelton 1, Beenleigh 2 Brisbane Olympic Utd 2, Inala City 3 Peninsula Power 2, Capalaba 2 Albany Creek 0, Eastern Suburbs 4 Redlands Utd 2, Newmarket 2 Rocklea Utd 1, Mt Gravatt Bye.

ROUND 12 FIXTURES

SATURDAY MAY 31

WYNNUM	v	NORTH STAR	7:00PM	Carm.Pk
PALM BEACH SHARKS	v	PINE RIVERS UTD	7:00PM	Palm. Bch
TWMBA RAIDERS	v	SOUTHS UTD	5:30PM	St. Toow
ROCHEDALE ROV	v	IPSW KNIGHTS	7:00PM	U'Wood Pk
THE GAP	v	BRISBANE CITY	7:00PM	Walt. B Pk

SUNDAY JUNE 1

QUEENSLAND LIONS v TARINGA ROVERS 4:00PM Lions SD



Victorian Chronicles

By Brendon Davis

Knights 50th Anniversary

Melbourne Knights celebrates its 50th anniversary this year - 20 of them in the National Soccer League where they have been consistently one of the best performed clubs. The celebrations are set to begin in earnest with the highlight being the club's celebratory Gala Night which will be held at the Atrium Ballroom on 21 June 2003 and the announcement of the Knights' Team of the Century that same evening.

A panel of six judges have been burning the midnight oil and every record book available in the process, in order to compile a who's who of the clubs sporting greats and then narrowing the selection down to 33 player and 2 coaching nominees.

Chaired by Frank Burin, the panel which included Sports Journalists Roy Hay, Peter Desira, Craig McKenzie and past players such as Dujo Zemunic and Ivan Roso completed the list of nominations late last week.

Melbourne Knights Team of The Century Nominee's are:

Keith Adams	Mirko Kovacek
Bozo Basic	Ante Kuzelek
Mirko Basic (COACH)	Andrew Marth
Ante Bilaver	Billy McArthur
Joe Biskic	Billy McIntyre
Peter Blasby	Bill McIntyre
David Cervinski	Hammy McMechan
Adrian Cervinski	David Miller
Tommy Cumming	Branko Milosevic
Fausto De Amicis	Ken Murphy
John Gardiner	Tom Podeljak
Steve Gojevic	Horst Rau
Ivan Grujic	Joe Simunic
George Hannah	Mark Tatalic
Steve Horvat	Danny Tiatto
Ivan Kelic	Danny Mark Viduka
Michael Kis (COACH)	Billy Vojtek
Steve Kokoska	

Tiatto & Viduka Rejoin Knight

As ABSW correctly reported some months ago both Danny Tiatto and Mark Viduka will be joining the Knights for their night or nights.

Another Knight great, Joe Simunic will also be joining them as will so many other former greats from this mighty club.

Liparoti To Marry

Injured South big man, the long serving defender Robert Liparoti will be getting married on Saturday 7th June.

The defender spent most of the season watching South from the Grandstand due to a knee reconstruction. ABSW wish him and his fiancee all the very best for the future and we hope to see him on the Park where he belongs in the first round of the new season.



South defender Robert Liparoti will be tying the knot in the soccer off-season.

South Surgery

Several South players have or are about to undergo corrective surgery.

So far a few senior players go under the knife for the customary end of season "clean-up". Fiery defender Nick Tolios is on the recovery trail after having an arthroscope on his left knee. He should be back on the track in 6 to 8 weeks.

Ray Sekulovski continues to nurture his right ankle after an interrupted season but he is expected to be back on track in six weeks.

South will likely make several major announcements starting this week.

On Thursday they are expecting to call a press conference to finally announce the new coach.

Following on from this the press can expect to

attend a number of press conferences where some exciting new season announcements will be made. ABSW will cover each of these.

Only In Sydney

We've been craving television coverage for our code for years and years.

So Victorian Soccer fans and administrators were astounded and absolutely shocked when they were informed by the Olympic Sharks through their controversial general manager, Peter Raskopolous, who sought a television blackout for the last week of the finals series.

"Once again he hasn't a clue, he thinks banning the cameras will result in thousands flooding through the gates at Olympic" one official told ABSW.

Both Victorian clubs have commented throughout the series how poor the attendances have been, especially in Sydney. Most Sydney finals have attracted significantly smaller attendances than the Melbourne clubs attract to regular season matches.

And surely the sponsors are entitled to a commercial return for their investments - surely television coverage assists greatly.

Likewise, the finals series, which should be our show piece, should be used by all soccer clubs to promote the game to assist in the long term viability of the NSL.

Only in Sydney, or maybe only at the Olympic Sharks.

EDITORIAL

NFL Clubs are frequently lambasted for poor management, with the major European clubs regarded as being well run and the management yardstick.

With the London Stock Exchange reporting season in full swing most of the publicly listed clubs (PLC's) have filed their half yearly returns. The results, for the most part paint a sad and sick picture on the major English Clubs.

Chelsea, Leeds, West Ham and Sunderland have each reported massive deficits. Fulham are homeless, heavily in debt, and have an absentee owner while newly promoted Leicester have just come out of administration. Even FA Cup winning Arsenal have to tighten their purse strings going forward.

Only Newcastle, Manchester United and Birmingham City have reported profits for the period.

Even the EPL's own balance sheet is a sad and sorry read.

Of greater concern is the future, few clubs seem to have articulated viable business plans enabling them to maintain their Premiership status and challenge seriously for the Championship - which after all is the real purpose of each clubs existence.

Saddest of the lot may be Bolton Wanderers. For the first time in the clubs history they have (just) retained their Premiership status for three consecutive years despite their lack of financial resources.

The chairman recently announced his "new business plan" the central plank being the development of a 21 unit hotel, which he compared to Chelsea Village.

Now this is hardly a miracle cure, assuming no debt, assuming the hotel is full every single night of the year and assuming a 50% net profit the maximum profit to the club is only half a million pounds, not even enough money to buy a young player, let alone established stars capable of securing silverware.

Over the next five years European clubs will face further reductions in television revenue. The better managed clubs, which are the ones mentioned above generating profits, have developed commercial and interactive media revenue streams which partly offset the reduced television revenue.

More than ever, clubs have to manage their brand then maximise the revenue accordingly. And they have to develop non football revenues, as the better managed, (and more profitable clubs have done).

The 2003/04 EPL season will probably see at least one club enter administration before the season concludes. Media speculation continues over who this will be with Fulham favourite ahead of Leeds.

Sadly the real determinant of on field success is the quality of the grey matter in the board rooms rather than the on field activities.

Australian soccer clubs are not in a boat on their own, all football clubs need to manage their business, their brand and their payrolls better.

But it's not that difficult, the last word goes to joint Birmingham Managing Director David Sullivan who said recently the key to balancing a budget at a football club is to "spend less money than you make".

NEWS FROM THE NATIONS CAPITAL

ADRIAN SANTRAC: FOCUSING ON THE JOB AT HAND

By Graham Cooke

Women's national coach Adrian Santrac will not allow the current uncertainties over the future of this year's World Cup to upset his players in their preparation for the tournament.

On the eve of a 22-player training camp at the Australian Institute of Sport in Canberra, he said it would be business as usual despite no one knowing where and when the World Cup would be played.

With the original host, China, ruled out because of continuing fears over Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome, which is still rampant in the country, FIFA is currently looking at several replacement possibilities in North America and Europe.

But while the names of Canada, Spain and Italy have been bandied about, Santrac believes it will be the United States that is chosen, despite the country having been the host for the last competition, in 1999.

"They have proved they can hold a successful tournament and all the facilities are in place," he said. "As for the timing, given the crowded program, I don't believe FIFA have much scope to move it forward or back more than a couple of weeks. We are doing our planning on that basis."

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AUSTRALIAN AND BRITISH SOCCER WEEKLY - MAY 27, 2003

China have already upset the Matildas' plans, after the SARS epidemic forced the country to withdraw from a two-match series in Australia later this year, which would have been an important preparation for both teams.

"We needed those two games, China are in the top four or five in the world and you can't replace opposition like that quickly," he said.

There was also no word from FIFA as to whether they plan to make the draw for the tournament before the Asian qualifiers are known at the end of June.

The coach said he was "comfortable" with what had been achieved so far, especially the win in the Oceania qualifying tournament in Canberra last month.

"Each time we play together we further develop an understanding of the game we are trying to play, and we are beginning to impose that game on the opposition," he said.

"We were good at doing that against Samoa and Papua New Guinea, but by our standards we were poor against the Cook Islands. We let ourselves down in that game."

Against New Zealand, the Kiwis had made a determined effort to knock the Australians out of their stride with a physical display, but the Matildas had come back to win 2-0.

"I was happy with the result and some components of the game, but in the end we should have left our mark in a more convincing manner," he said.

"My single area of concern is that at times we were rushed in the performance of our duties. We were put off

our game by the physical nature of New Zealand's play."

He pointed out that most of the team that played against New Zealand were facing Australia's traditional rivals for the first time. "Most had less than 15 international caps, so the level of experience is a concern," he said.

"When we come up against countries that are physical but also more talented than New Zealand - I'm thinking of the US, Germany, Sweden and Norway - they will also have the edge on us because of the enormous amount of international experience in their teams."

"Where those countries are at the moment is where we are going. What is most pleasing about the current squad is the speed at which they are learning. This is a team that can meet challenges, no matter how difficult."

Of the 22 players at the AIS camp, four are newcomers. Caitlin Munoz, Amber Neilson and Karina Reuter are veterans of the 2002 under-19 world championship; goalkeeper Amy Beattie is seeking her first international cap at any level.

The other 18, all Australian-based and scholarship holders at the AIS, are: Melissa Barbieri (7 caps), Rhian Davies (17), Hayley Crawford (4), Bryony Duus (37), Gill Foster (15), Heather Garriock (35), Pam Grant (4),



Adrian Santrac:
Has the task of
motivating his
chargers for the
up and coming
World Cup.

Peita-Claire Hepperlin (19), Olivia Hohnke (8), Tal Karp (10), Cassandra Kell (7), April Mann (17), Claire Nichols (19), Taryn Rockall (6), Thea Slatyer (11), Danielle Small (16), Sacha Wainwright (49), Amy Wilson (36).

WE ARE NUMBER ONE!

Despite the crisis at the top of Australian soccer, the game itself has never been more popular, with record levels of interest recorded in a number of key areas, the 18th Annual Sweeney Sports Report has found.

The report found the surge began after last year's World Cup finals in Korea and Japan and received another boost with the FIFA decision to award the Oceania region a direct qualification spot for the next championship, in Germany in 2006.

However, the increase in itself is not surprising. The report has been recording regular boosts in soccer's grass roots popularity since the low points of 1988-89.

Acting chief executive Stefan Kamasz said he was pleased with the findings.

"Soccer Australia is delighted that our sport continues to receive increasing levels of recognition within Australia," he said.

"With the Socceroos about to embark on further international matches, and with their World Cup qualification series next year, and the Matildas, Young Socceroos and Joeys all involved in their respective world cup finals this year, Soccer Australia anticipates further growth for the foreseeable future."

CHAMPIONS LEAGUE PREVIEW

AC MILAN -v- JUVENTUS

By Peter Damalas

Italy is bracing itself for the Champions League Final, being held at Manchester's Old Trafford ground, Thursday morning eastern standard time.

This is the first occasion where two teams from Serie A will contest the biggest match in the European calendar, after Real Madrid and Valencia achieved the feat for Spanish football in 2000.

The match will divide Italy into the rossoneri and bianconeri camps, as the two most heavily supported teams go head to head. In terms of prestige and success, little divides the two clubs.

While Juventus, the Grand Old Lady of Italian football, are without a doubt at the top of the tree with 27 championships to their name, they have struggled to translate this into European domination. Their two previous Champions Cup victories came in 1985, when Michel Platini led them to a 1-0 win over Liverpool in a match that was overshadowed by the Heysel Stadium disaster in which 39 Italian fans were killed, and in 1996, when they overcame Ajax on penalties.

AC Milan, on the other hand, have long been the standard bearers for calcio on the European stage with five Champions Cups, while they have won the scudetto sixteen times.

This season has marked the resurgence of Italian club football after a five year cycle of domination by Spanish teams, in particular the mighty Real Madrid.

Many critics have pointed out that the reason for this sudden return to the heights of European football is the adoption of an ultra defensive approach, 'catenaccio', a philosophy that has become synonymous with Italian football.

Valencia coach, Rafael Benitez, was particularly critical of Inter Milan's dour tactics in their quarter final tie.

While the defensive abilities of both Juventus and AC Milan are second to none, their progression to the final stage has been on the back of some sterling performances up front.

Marcello Lippi has once again weaved his magic in Turin after returning in 2001, and the likes of Nedved, Camoranesi, Di Vaio and captain Alessandro Del Piero, have been

given free flowing attacking roles at various stages of the season, with Frenchman David Trezeguet often on hand to provide the finishing touch.

AC Milan's Carlo Ancelotti, has also pulled many surprises this season. When the board announced the signatures of creative talents Rivaldo and Clarence Seedorf at the start of the season, most analysts wondered how Ancelotti would possibly fit these players into his usually strict formation. The former Juventus manager confounded the sceptics by finding regular spots for the many through-ball specialists at his disposal.

He has been given credit for the attacking 4-3-2-1 formation, which has utilised Seedorf's graft, Rui Costa's sublime playmaking skills, Andrea Pirlo's passing accuracy, and Filippo Inzaghi's finishing.

Pirlo in particular, has been a revelation this season where he has flourished as the heartbeat of the team in central midfield, the position previously occupied by Demetrio Albertini.

Previous meetings between the two this season have yielded one win each, and the players know each other well.

Making matters even more interesting is the opportunity for both teams to achieve a unique 'double'. While Juventus wrapped up the scudetto three weeks ago, they will be focused on claiming the big prize and making up for successive Final losses in 1997 and 1998. AC Milan have all but secured the Coppa Italia after an impressive 4-1 victory over AS Roma in the first leg, a match in which they played a second string team.

Throughout the season, long serving captain Paolo Maldini has nominated the Champions League as the club's major priority. The colossal defender will contest the trophy with the man nicknamed, Il Pinturicchio, Alessandro Del Piero.

Here is how the Final will pan out.

THE COACHES:

Marcello Lippi is the more experienced of the two in this competition, while Ancelotti has developed an excellent reputation for his work under Arrigo Sacchi in the Italian national team, and at Parma.

The former Milan midfielder has bitter memories of his time at the Stadio Delle Alpi, when the club arranged to replace him with Lippi during the 2000-2001 season, when Juventus were well in the running for the scudetto.

This will provide him with extra motivation. Both coaches adopt a highly tactical

approach to the game, and will find ways of cancelling out the opposing danger men.

THE GOALKEEPERS:

Italy's Number One, Gianluigi Buffon, has improved immensely this season, and his knack of saving penalties has rescued Juventus on a number of occasions. After an uncertain World Cup, Buffon has grown in confidence and maturity. Christian Abbiati has proven a capable replacement for Brazilian mainstay Dida, after he broke his finger. His impressive display in the Olympic Stadium against AS Roma may be rewarded with a Champions League Final berth.

THE DEFENDERS:

Juventus welcome back veteran Ciro Ferrara into the fold following suspension, and he will slot in beside Montero at the heart of the defence.

Frenchman Lilian Thuram seems happy playing at right back, while on the left, Alessandro Birindelli is likely to be preferred to Pessotto for his man-marking abilities. AC Milan's defence remains impregnable, with Nesta and Maldini playing a major role in the success this season. Georgian Kakha Kaladze will play at left back, while Simic and Costacurta will vye for the final position.

THE MIDFIELDERS:

The key to the ongoing success of Juventus has been the engine room. Alessio Tacchinardi has been a formidable shield for the defence, while the non-stop running of Edgar Davids has set up many opportunities for the frontmen.

Gianluca Zambrotta has been perhaps the most consistent player this season, considering that he has performed admirably in his various roles (left back, left midfield, right midfield), although he may play on the right hand side against AC Milan to nullify the threat of Seedorf and Kaladze.

The rossoneri have an embarrassment of riches in this department, but Seedorf-Pirlo-Gattuso is the favoured combination. While Milan play a short passing game and focus their attacks through the middle, Serginho and Brocchi may play a part in providing width.

Other options for Ancelotti include Ambrosini, who can match it with most players in midfield, and Redondo, who is a proven winner in Europe.

THE FORWARDS:

The suspension of Pavel Nedved is without a doubt a worrying factor for the bianconeri. The Czech international has largely carried the team on his 30 year old shoulders, considering Del Piero's long injury lay-off during the festive season. The multi-talented playmaker has scored vital goals to knock out Barcelona and Real Madrid, and is idolised by supporters in the same way Zidane was in the past. Since 1994-1995, Juventus have consistently played with two strikers and a third man in between the frontline and midfield, and Lippi is likely to drag Del Piero into this role, with Di Vaio partnering Trezeguet. Del Piero will certainly be comfortable in this position, considering he won this event in 1996 alongside Vialli and Ravanelli.

AC Milan's strike force is more straightforward, and perhaps less mobile.

While Shevchenko may deviate to the left or right, his partner, former Juventus stalwart, Filippo Inzaghi, is the classic penalty box poacher, and has improved his strike rate after his first season at the San Siro was plagued by injury. Brazilian superstar Rivaldo has spent most of the season on the sidelines, but is almost certain to figure in this fixture.

Despite enduring a disappointing campaign, he definitely has the skill and ability to turn the match around.

THE OUTCOME:

The winner of the Champions League will be the team that displays the most determination and courage.

This may be the final crack at European glory for the likes of Ferrara and Maldini, both long term servants who have become institutions at their respective clubs.

Like the semi final between the two Milanese giants, expect a cat and mouse affair, with very little space in midfield where the individual players can shine. The team which takes a risk at the appropriate time in the match will win.

The loss of Nedved may hand AC Milan the advantage, simply because they have more matchwinners in their squad. However, Juventus have the team spirit and the motivation to succeed, and should they win, they will dedicate victory to the memory of former owner, Giovanni Agnelli.

But the ultimate determining factor in this all Italian Final may be the presence of the most powerful man in Italy, Silvio Berlusconi. The Prime Minister, and former President of AC Milan has an unenviable record in the Champions Cup. He has missed every AC Milan success, while he was on hand in Munich and Vienna to witness his team lose in the Final.

The 2002-2003 finalists cancel each other out in terms of players, tactics, management and history. At the end of the day, it will boil down to the battle of the wills.



The AC Milan trio of Gattuso, Shevchenko and Rui Costa will need to be at their best against a tough Juve defence.

PREMIERSHIP BIZARRO

Nige and Derek here from BananaTV's Premiership Bizarro. Every week we give you our views and opinions on what's going on, and off, in the English Premiership.

Sad Old Spurs

What has happened to the Tottenham Hotspur? The Spurs. Derek hates them and so does Nige. The Sad Old Spurs story here is that Nige, was once a Spurs supporter until the 4-0 shellacking received from the marching Saints, in the FA Cup this year. How does a life long Spurs fan decide to be a turncoat to Plymouth Argyle? He couldn't take any more that's how!

The once mighty Spurs of the 60's; Dave Mackay, Alan Gilzean, Martin Peters and Chivers days were a team of hard men. You would not have wanted to have Mackay and Gilzean on your case. Then, in the mid 70's, they were starting to play an entertaining brand of football. '78 saw Spurs stun the English nation by pulling off the transfer coup of the age by signing World Cup winners Ozzie Ardiles and Ricky Villa. The football got even better.

Into the '80's with the Diamond Knight's Glen Hoddle and Chris Waddle, and, of course jolly Geordie Gazza. These guys were genuine world

beaters plying their trade at White Hart Lane.

Here we are in 2003 and the organization is in tatters. Glen Hoddle is back at the Lane but not with the success that he was last time. In fact, Glen Hoddle does not look a well man. Spurs find themselves owned by a company called ENIC that makes its money from...owning football teams. 2 years ago ENIC's net profit was 11 million quid. How does 11 mil buy quality players for Spurs and all the other teams ENIC owns? It doesn't. Only this season, when trying for an 8th time to buy a striker in Michael Ricketts, Spurs were once again embarrassed. Bolton wanted 7 mil for Ricketts and Spurs came up with 700k. Ricketts ended up signing for Boro for 3 million.

When Leeds Utd offered Robbie "Really" Keane to Spurs Glen said he didn't rate him, let alone want to sign him. Only to do a spectacular reverse and sign him a couple of months later. You'd be choc-a-block with confidence knowing your Gaffer doesn't rate you when you walk onto the training park. Spurs then took a potential world-class player in Sergi

Rebrov and managed to turn him into a Sunday park player. Teddy Sheringham, only this week has been shown the door by Glen, fearing for the threat of Teddy getting his job. Teddy has been quoted that he is "better off out of there". Agents, the cause of the financial crisis in the game, are even whining about dealing with

Tottenham, saying that you can talk to Levy, Pleat and Hoddle and none of them agree on anything. Potential transfer targets, and there are numerous, have been running for the hills when they find that Tottenham are after them. It's like Tottenham are the living dead of the Premiership. However you cannot say that are not consistent. They have finished 10th for the past 5 seasons. Maybe this season 8th place effort should be considered a stellar campaign. But yet again, no European football, not even crappy UEFA cup football.

So, what does the off-season hold for Tottenham. They are currently touring Major League Soccer cities in the U.S and not doing too well against the Seppo's. Teddy played his last game in Spurs colours

in the 1-0 defeat against the all-mighty D.C United. He had a rye smile of relief on his face as he left the field. They should be playing in the Intertotopole Cup to try and cheat their way into Europe rather than noncing around in America. Maybe they will work that one out next year when they finish 10th again. Glen has said that he needs more time to get things right. There is 2 years up and the clock is ticking. How much time is required to complete this task, especially when the war chest has moths in it and you have to make do with what you've got unless ENIC go to HSBC for a personal loan? We don't think Glen will see out the season. Killing off Teddy, who is a legend at the Lane was a mistake along the lines of Uday Hussein, except Glen didn't use a gold plated kalashnikov to kill off his rival, he used the press.

This fan has cut all emotional attachment to Tottenham. It has been like a divorce, tough, but life goes on and you get over it.

See you next week.

Premiership Bizarro

To catch Nige and Derek on Premiership Bizarro, their internet TV show, go to www.bananatv.com

And click on Premiership Soccer. New episodes added each week. Don't miss it.



Matilda banned for doping offence



Anissa Tann has been banned for two-years from soccer for testing positive to the drug nandrolone.

Australia's most capped woman soccer player, Anissa Tann, has been found guilty of a doping offence by the Court of Arbitration for Sport (CAS).

Soccer Australia announced the former Matildas captain had been suspended for two years, effective from December 9 last year when she tested positive for nandrolone.

However, Tann, 35, has appealed the decision and is hopeful she will be available to play in her third World Cup in China later this year.

Tann's lawyer, James Jordan, said CAS found Tann did not knowingly take any drugs but that she took a protein drink that was contaminated with drugs not on the label.

"The reason they found she should be suspended was she should've checked or tested

this freely available protein drink," he said.

"We are arguing she was acting reasonably because it wasn't on any prohibited list."

He said he hoped the appeal could be heard as early as next week.

"We hope to have the appeal heard and found in her favour so she can represent her country at the World Cup."

Before the first CAS hearing, Jordan said Tann would draw on several nandrolone cases from Europe, where athletes had proven they had the steroid in their system through a build-up from exercise.

Australian Sports Drug Agency spokesman Shawn Winnett wouldn't comment on Tann's case but said athletes were told supplements weren't 100 per cent safe and there were risks of contamination.

Australian athletes receive a lot of education and we alert athletes to the risks of using supplements," he said.

Tann has played 102 games for Australia, was captain from 1991-94, represented Australia in the 1995 and 1999 World Cups and the 2000 Sydney Olympics and has held a variety of coaching positions at state and national level.

Other high-profile athletes to test positive to nandrolone include French soccer star Christophe Dugarry, sprinters Linford Christie and Merlene Ottey, German middle distance runner Dieter Baumann and 1998 Australian Open tennis winner Petr Korda.

A Soccer Australian spokesman said the world governing body, FIFA, had been notified and the ban was effective globally in all soccer competitions.

He said Tann had opted to appeal and another CAS hearing would be rescheduled, but refused to comment further.

QLD ANNOUNCE STATE SQUAD

State Team Schedule

State Coach, Peter Tokesi, has invited 24 players into a training squad for this year's State Team. Games against the Gold Coast and Sunshine Coast have been arranged to identify potential State Representatives from these regions.

Cubs have been asked to relay the invitation to their respective players.

The following provisional schedule has been programmed in preparation for the

upcoming State Match against a NSW State representative squad.

QLD State coach Peter Tokesi takes over last year's head man Danny Wright who ventured off to South Melbourne last season but felt the brunt of the club after not finishing out the remainder of the NSL season.

QLD Lions take up most of the spots with eight players in contention of possible spot in this year's state squad.

2003 State Team Training Squad

Brisbane City	Damian Waugh	Wayne Strange	
Brisbane Strikers	Josh Rose		
Ipswich Knights	Trent Griffiths		
Palm Beach Sharks	Duncan Easton		
Pine Rivers	Joel Hale	Kouji Kanagana	
Queensland Lions	Andrew Davidson Greg Di Losa Ross Davidson	Darren Sime Jason Lucas Todd Gava	Matthew Olley Warren Moon
Souths United	Wade Cannon		
Taringa	Clint Dal Santo Luke Morley	Craig Slaughter Matthew Bell	Pablo Aviles
Toowoomba Raiders	Matty Hilli		
Wynnum	Scott Higgins	Shane Coffey	

VIDUKA PUTS HIS FEET UP

Socceroo striker Mark Viduka is back in Melbourne to enjoy his time off from football as he admitted his future at debt-ridden Premier League side Leeds was still uncertain.

The 27-year-old is in Australia for a couple of weeks to catch up with his family and friends and was a surprise guest on Wednesday night's The Panel.

Asked if he and Harry Kewell would be playing at Elland Road next season, Viduka said he did not know.

"It's difficult to tell. The club's had a lot of financial problems lately and we are quite expensive players for them and it's basically up to them."

Linked with big money transfers to Tottenham and Serie A outfit Roma, Viduka declared that he was ready to leave Leeds if a deal was struck.

"If that's the case I will have to," he said.

Despite the insane wages some players are paid, Viduka maintains that inflated egos are not prevalent.

"Everybody looks after their own financial situation. Some players are superstars and act like prima donnas but in England I think most of it's about the team atmosphere of everyone working hard for each other."

Leeds barely escaped relegation to the First Division with Viduka's 20 Premier League goals a major contributing factor.

The married father of one has earned his time off and just wants to put his feet up and forget about football for a little while.

"We play and train for 10 months a year and you get a couple of months off and you just want to relax."

Viduka is one of Australia's highest earning sporting stars and as such his

profile has grown to a point where he is recognised wherever he goes.

"Everybody asks me about football but I just miss home and my family. I used to be able to [walk around the streets unrecognised] but lately its changed a lot," he said.

"Everybody watches the Premiership and it's really popular and I'm surprised how popular it's become."

Yet the press does not hound him like he was when he was at Glasgow giants Celtic.

"When I was in Scotland and playing for Celtic it was like that. The press over there are crazy."

Viduka played down recent talk that drugs, alcohol and gambling are becoming major problems in English football.

"The things you probably hear are about are the minority. There are heaps of players who have a normal career. The problem is just one or two players."



Mark Viduka: Leeds Star has returned to Melbourne on Holidays.

Power chases Greek keeper



Kyriakos Tohouroglou: Current PAOK Salonika keeper could be a new inclusion for the Power next season.

Parramatta Power coach Nick Theodoropoulos has admitted that he wants PAOK's Australian-born goalkeeper Kyriakos Tohouroglou at the club next season.

Tohouroglou, 30, helped PAOK Salonika win the Greek Cup 1-0 against Aris last weekend but revealed he was considering a move home as he is fed up with the dramas surrounding the state of Greek football.

"This Cup final victory makes up for the one I missed two years ago when I broke my shoulder and Ante Covic [the former Marconi keeper] took my place," Tohouroglou, told The Daily Telegraph from Greece.

Theodoropoulos admitted that he has been in contact with Tohouroglou and is waiting for his response.

"He'd be a tremendous asset for our club because of his European experience with Olympiakos in the Champions League and PAOK," the Power coach said.

"We actually made him an offer once before but his coach (Dusan Bajevic) wouldn't release him from his contract. I know his contract expires soon."

Tohouroglou has been in fine form of late for side PAOK Salonika.

Born and raised in Lilyfield and having donned the jersey of current Third Division NSW side Gladesville United, Kyriakos moved to Greece with his parents as a teenager to take up the sport there.

Greek football has been hampered in

past seasons with a number of clubs shown with the strain of facing financial difficulties.

This was to do with the collapse of one of Greece's leading television stations who put an end to showing live Greek football matches thus cutting funds towards all the Greek sides.

The past seven seasons has seen Greek giants Olympiakos claim the title, and from all reports look set to do it again.

It's been no secret that Greek football has been known as three-way competition for the title fought amongst Olympiakos, Panathinaikos and AEK Athens.

At this current stage, teenage keeper Danny Vukovic has held Parramatta's number one spot for the past couple of weeks.

'Vuko' replaced Liam Reddy due to disciplinary reasons and with this new wave of information hitting the press about a new keeper, it will only be time until Reddy finds himself another side in the National League or overseas in that matter.

Power did have a dilemma at the start of the National League season after the squad found it tough to find that elusive first team keeper.

SOCCE woman

By Janene Mar

DE VANNA, GARRICK, AND KARP IN LINE FOR JULIE DOLAN MEDAL

Qantas Matildas midfielders Heather Garriock (Queensland Sting) and Tal Karp (Canberra Eclipse), along with WNSL Top Goalscorer Lisa De Vanna (Adelaide Sensation) are the top three players in contention for the Julie Dolan Medal, to be awarded to the WNSL player of the season, it was announced last Tuesday.

Western Australia has two representatives amongst the trio. Perth resident De Vanna has been a draft player for the Adelaide Sensation for the past two seasons; whilst Karp relocated to Canberra from her hometown of Perth in 1999.

The WNSL award winners and date of presentation will be announced at a later date, in conjunction with the (men's) NSL Awards.

Details of nominees and awards are as follows -

JULIE DOLAN MEDAL (WNSL PLAYER OF THE SEASON AWARD)

*The Julie Dolan Medal is awarded to the WNSL player of the season. At the end of every match during the preliminary rounds, 3-2-1 votes are submitted by three separate parties - the referee, the Women's National Coach (if in attendance, or alternatively a spectating qualified coach), and a media representative.

LISA DE VANNA - Adelaide Sensation

Season's top goalscorer, many of them spectacular strikes. Came second in last year's Julie Dolan Medal in her rookie season, and took out the Rising Star award. A speedster up front who has the ability to mesmerise her way past defenders.

Born: 14/11/84

Resides: Perth WA

Position: Forward

Underage Australian Representative honours:
U19 – 2002 Oceania U19 World Championship Qualifiers (Tonga)

WNSL Clubs:

2001/02 – Adelaide Sensation – Rising Star Award;
2nd in Julie Dolan Medal

2002/03 – Adelaide Sensation

HEATHER GARRICK - Queensland Sting

A dynamic left midfielder, renowned for her ability to make things happen out of nothing. At her most dangerous carving her way up the flank and providing pinpoint crosses.

Born: 21/12/82

Resides: Brisbane QLD

Hometown: Sydney NSW

Position: Midfielder

Australian Institute of Sport scholarship athlete
Queensland Academy of Sport scholarship athlete

Qantas Matildas honours:

35 A-international caps / 6 goals
includes 2000 Olympic Games (Sydney)
2003 Oceania Women's World Cup Qualifiers, Canberra

WNSL Clubs :

2002/03 – Queensland Sting
1996/97 to 2001/02 – NSW Sapphires/NSW Institute of Sport

TAL KARP - Canberra Eclipse

An everpresent in the centre of the park, either building attacking moves or tenaciously winning the ball off the opposition.

Born: 30/12/81

Resides: Canberra ACT

Hometown: Perth WA

Position: Midfielder

Australian Institute of Sport scholarship athlete
ACT Academy of Sport scholarship athlete

Underage Australian Representative honours:

U19 – 1998 Tour to The Netherlands

Qantas Matildas honours :

10 A-international caps / 2 goals
includes 2003 Oceania Women's World Cup Qualifiers, Canberra

WNSL Clubs:

1996/97 and 1999/00 to 2002/03 – Canberra Eclipse/ACT Academy of Sport
1997/98 – SA Sports Institute

WNSL RISING STAR AWARD

This award will be presented to the highest polling WNSL player who made their starting debut during the 2002/03 WNSL season.



Heather Garriock & Tal Karp are two of the three players nominated in the Julie Dolan Medal.

WNSL TOP GOALSCORER AWARD

LISA DE VANNA - Adelaide Sensation

WNSL CHAMPIONS QUEENSLAND STING

Winner of the 2002/03 WNSL Grand Final.

WOMEN'S INTERNATIONAL PLAYER OF THE YEAR AWARD

This award will be presented to the Qantas Matildas player deemed to have performed the best in international competition over the last twelve months, as selected by Qantas Women's National/AIS coach Adrian Santrac.

AUSSIES HEAD TO W-LEAGUE

Several younger Aussies have headed to the US and Canada over recent weeks to compete in the W-League, America's top non-professional league.

South Australian midfielder Stacey Stocco, mem-

ber of the Qantas Young Matildas team which competed in last year's FIFA U19 Women's World Championship, has headed to Boston Renegades, W-League national championships the past two years. The Renegades opened their season a week ago with a win over New Jersey, with Stocco impressive in central midfield.

ACT defender Simone Borucinski, a 2000 Australian U17 Team member, returns to Greensboro Twisters for her second consecutive season. Unable to play in the team's opening game a fortnight ago waiting on her clearance, Borucinski last week played the full 90 minutes of both her team's two matches.

ACT goalkeeper (and more recently of Northern NSW Pride) Lisa Hartley, a Qantas Young Matilda at the 2002 U19 Women's World Championship, has joined Arizona Heatwave who commenced their season on the weekend. Hartley has played in one friendly, and the team is also scheduled to play exhibition matches against two WUSA teams later in the year.

South Australian defender Chichi May, a 2001 Australian U19 rep, last week jetted to Canada's Toronto Inferno. Toronto kick off their W-League campaign at the end of this month.

SEEKING DEAF PLAYERS

Deaf Soccer Australia are seeking female and male deaf players (open age) interested in representing Australia at the 2004 Asia/Pacific Deaf Football Championship and the 2005 Deaflympics in Melbourne.

Those interested, please contact Daryl Jordan, General Secretary, Deaf Soccer Australia on fax 02/9703.0490, e-mail deafsoccer@ihug.com.au, or mail to 38 Etela St, Belmore NSW 2192.

WORLD CUP VENUE UPDATE

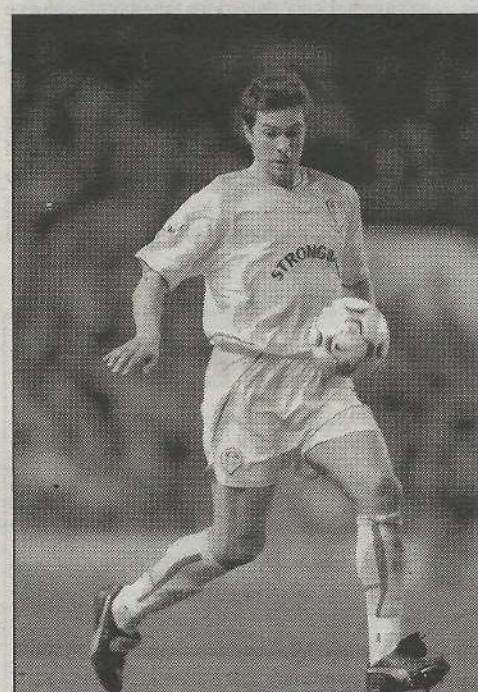
There is no decision yet on who will become the new host nation of this year's FIFA Women's World Cup.

The event was originally to be held in China, until FIFA announced on 3 May that it would be moved to another country due to the risks posed by the SARS virus.

Little further news came through during the week, but according to Associated Press, US Soccer sent a revised plan to FIFA last Friday week, three days after their meetings at FIFA offices in Zurich. The amendments made were budgetary matters.

Associated Press also reported that FIFA had set a deadline of Thursday 15 May for formal bids from any other nations.

Okon set to leave Leeds



Paul Okon: Socceroo skipper is set to leave Elland Road.

Australian international midfielder Paul Okon could be on his way out of Elland Road after finding himself surplus to requirements under manager Peter Reid at the end of last season.

Okon was initially signed by former manager Terry Venables last summer on a free transfer from Middlesbrough, and after struggling with injury, eventually forced his way into the first-team where he made 21 appearances.

But the arrival of Reid led to Okon being dropped, and now he is considering his future, particularly amid fears he could miss out on playing for his country in the 2006 World Cup finals.

Okon is willing to stay at Leeds if he receives assurances from Reid he will figure in his plans, with talks due to take place over the next two weeks between the club and the player's manager, Sydney-based Leo Karis.

"If the indications are that he will not figure prominently under Peter Reid, he may look at the options," revealed Karis.

"Paul is keen to play regular football week-in and week-out and if he is not going to do that at Leeds he would consider doing it elsewhere."

"Paul feels he can still offer something at this level and he is determined to go to the next World Cup, so he must look not just at his short-term future but his long-term as well."

LOWY LAYS DOWN LAW

A three-year term in office and no secret ballots - these are the new conditions that have to be met before Frank Lowy and his team will take over the running of Australian soccer.

According to SBS TV's Toyota World Sports, Lowy's proposed term will be extended from two years to three, to cover the 2006 World Cup. The demand for open elections comes after Soccer Australia's board called a vote for June the 7th, specifying a secret ballot and contested elections for Lowy and his team.

Six weeks after David Crawford unveiled his "Triple A" team to reform Australian soccer... Frank Lowy and his hand-picked line-up are still waiting in the wings. While the handover of power has been bogged down by legal and political problems, some long-term planning is starting to take shape.

The Crawford report recom-

mended Lowy and his team be given a two-year mandate to overhaul Soccer Australia, but even before taking over, the proposed term of office has been extended to three years.

The push to keep Lowy in the job for at least an extra year is being driven by the 2006 World Cup.



Under the initial timetable, Lowy's term in office was to end in late 2005, but it's understood potential commercial partners have raised concerns.

With lucrative TV, marketing and sponsorship deals to be built around the World Cup, the pres-

ence of Lowy, Singleton and Walker through to 2006 is seen as a crucial ingredient.

But first, the Lowy team needs to be installed. Elections on May the 3rd collapsed and a second attempt - set down for June the 7th - may go the same way.

The board of Soccer Australia has called contested elections by secret ballot. Key stakeholders oppose the plan, having been warned Lowy is likely to reject this method.

Further complicating matters, three of the four board members - acting chairman Les Avery, former Perth Glory part-owner Paul Afkos and IEC managing director Dominic Galati - are still refusing to stand down, and say they will have to be voted out of office.

To break the impasse, a third meeting - this one called by key stakeholders - is likely to be convened on June the 14th... finally paving the way for much-needed reform.

ZANE WORKS HIS WAY BACK



Clayton Zane: The current Socceroo is on the books at Belgian giants Anderlecht.

Somewhat forgotten Australian striker Clayton Zane reveals his injury setbacks at Anderlecht and his goal to force his way back in to Socceroos calculations.

In an EXCLUSIVE interview with The World Game, Zane documented his shocking run of luck in Brussels, but despite his misfortune on the field the former Newcastle United and Northern Spirit forward is enjoying life off it.

"It's been quite easy to live here and I settled in from the word go. I'm pretty well looked after by the club and I think it's a much easier place to live than Norway," the 25-year-old said.

"I live in Brussels and I'm close to a lot of friends based in England so in that respect it's been good. I am also learning a bit of French, which makes things a bit easier as well."

Zane keeps in regular contact with Belgium-based duo Josip Skoko and Archie Thompson while former Olyroos teammates Hayden Foxe and Mark Robertson are on Zane's speed dial.

Yet it has not all been good news for Zane. "I got injured in late October, early November last year and had an operation. Since then I've only just made it on the field now," he said.

A problem with the cartilage behind the knee cap was worse than first anticipated but after two failed comebacks, Zane is confident that it will be third time lucky.

"I started the first few games of the season and had a run of 5 or 6 matches" - in which he scored three times - "and then broke my hand. And then I did my knee. It's been a little disappointing in that respect but

the team's been doing well."

In fact, Anderlecht has won its last 10 league games.

"Probably on a personal note things are starting to look up now and I guess I just have to get myself ready for next season," Zane continued.

"I've been training for about the last two weeks but with only two games remaining in the season I was told to just take it easy for now and concentrate on strengthening the knee in the off-season.

"It looked like I may have been ready for the last couple of games but the club has taken a cautious view of it and said there is no point injuring it again."

Zane has another three years to run on his contract, and it is this security that keeps him looking forward to the future.

"We start back on July 1. We have wrapped up second place in the Jupiler League so we have the Champions League qualifiers," Zane explained.

"The team has performed very well and that's given me a boost knowing that we are in with a chance of qualifying for the Champions League next season."

Following a stellar spell at Lillestrom in Norway, Zane joined Anderlecht in a bid to further his career and push for a regular place in Frank Farina's Australian side.

Zane scored the winner against France in the 2001 Confederations Cup in Japan and played a key role as the Socceroos reached the semi-finals.

However, since then he has been a bit-part member of the squad with Mark Viduka and Harry Kewell having a mortgage on the front two spots.

"I can't really complain," a philosophical Zane

said. "I was a little bit disappointed after the season in Norway to miss out on the Uruguay games but then things turned around for me and I was called in even though I didn't play a part."

"But I haven't really played much football since then so it's not really something that's worried me. The only way I can get selected is to be playing and my main concern now is to get over this knee problem."

"It's always good to see results like the one against England and to see the team doing well but at the same time I want to be part of it."

Zane is buoyed by Oceania's direct entry to Germany 2006 but remains realistic about his chances of a starting spot for the national team.

"Hopefully for someone like me, in a couple of years I should be at my peak. Direct entry does give everyone that extra little bit of incentive to make it this time," he said.

"The main thing for me is I know I'm never going to be a regular with the talent that Frank (Farina) has to choose from up front, but I will always try to push myself into the squad."

The National Soccer League still interests Zane, who returns to Australia at least twice a year, and he keeps tabs on Newcastle's Championship Series form via the internet while he also keeps in touch with some former Newcastle team-mates.



Goal Project Ceremony in PNG



FIFA President Sepp Blatter.

The Oceania Football Confederation president, Basil Scarsella, will officially represent FIFA at the inauguration ceremony of the Goal Project for Papua New Guinea on 24 May 2003.

The Papua New Guinea Football Association (PNGFA) had been informed that FIFA President, Joseph Blatter, was unable to attend because of a busy schedule but he promised a visit within the next three years. In his place, Mr Scarsella, who is a co-opted member of the FIFA Executive Committee, has been invited to jointly open the new fields, PNGFA headquarters and National

Football Academy along with the PNG Prime Minister, Sir Michael Somare.

"It is an honour to represent both FIFA and the OFC at this important occasion for Papua New Guinea football," said Scarsella.

"We are pleased at the progress being made there at all levels of the game and confident the development of football will grow even more now with these new state-of-the-art facilities accessible to all stakeholders of the game in PNG."

The full OFC delegation to PNG comprises OFC President, Basil Scarsella, OFC Senior Vice President, Tautulu Roebeck (Samoa),

OFC Vice President, Adrian Wickham (Solomon Islands) and OFC General Secretary, Josephine King.

A host of other dignitaries, officials and special guests from around the region are also invited to the inauguration ceremony. The occasion will be an historic moment for the PNGFA, as it will relocate its headquarters to the site of the goal project in Lae, situated in the Morobe Province. Aside from the new headquarters, the Goal Project also includes a new two-storey accommodation building and educational centre capable of housing up to 30 people. Two international standard, sand carpeted, fully irrigated fields have also been constructed.

Papua New Guinea is the second OFC Member National Association to have a Goal Project inaugurated this year after Fiji's inaugu-

ration on 8 February. The Cook Islands celebrated its ground-breaking ceremony three weeks ago with inauguration set for December. The Goal Projects for Tonga and Vanuatu are currently under construction while American Samoa and New Zealand have been the latest national associations to receive approval from FIFA. The Solomon Islands and Samoa were chosen as pilot projects and had their Goal Projects completed in 2001.

The FIFA Goal Programme was initiated by President Joseph S. Blatter for the benefit of national associations, and ratified by the 1999 Extraordinary FIFA Congress in Los Angeles. Goal is a tailor-made development and assistance programme designed to realise projects based on the specific needs of national associations.

Tiatto's welcome return



Danny Tiatto: Aussie star has returned from injury for club Manchester City.

Australian midfielder Danny Tiatto has played his first game since Boxing Day in a Manchester City reserve team fixture.

The 29-year-old Socceroo put in a solid 60-minute display following five months on the sidelines with a groin problem.

"I was quite happy with my game," Tiatto told Manchester City's official website mcfc.co.uk.

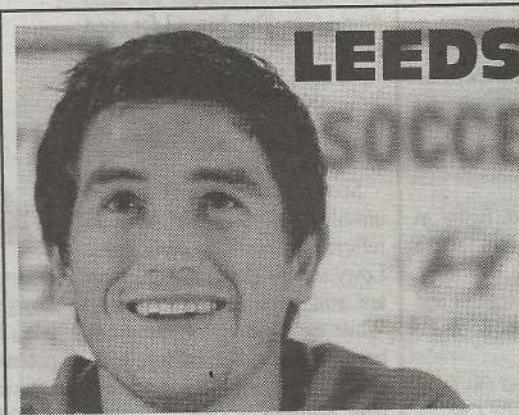
"I have had a lot of stops and starts since the injury happened and it was good to know that the groin has now settled down and that I won't need an operation in the (northern) summer."

It was feared that Tiatto would require surgery to repair the damage to his groin suffered in the clash against Aston Villa at Maine Road, as his previous comeback attempts were aborted.

"The problem was that the abductor muscle in the groin had come away from the bone and every time I made a comeback in training it happened again," he explained.

"It took much longer to get back than expected as I had returned to training too early and I had to learn not to force it so much. I only trained for four days leading up to the final match of the season with the senior squad and then a couple of extra days with the younger lads."

"Everyone wanted me to test it by playing in the reserves to make sure the injury had cleared up and that I would be ready to go for next season. I have to say it was a strange time to start my season playing in the final match of the year."



LEEDS **FOCUS ON KEWELL**
Harry Kewell: Leeds United are desperate to strike up a new deal with the Australian star.

Leeds chairman Professor John McKenzie insists the club "cannot allow" Harry Kewell to see out his contract and walk away from Elland Road for £100,000 (\$A250,000) in January.

The Australian striker is in the midst of contract talks with Leeds but has been linked with Manchester United and Liverpool in recent weeks.

"We hope that Harry will stay."

"I will be looking to meet his agent again next week when I believe we will be in a position to put a new proposal to him."

"We all know what happened to Lee Bowyer and how he was able to walk away for almost nothing and we cannot allow that to happen again."

NATIONAL SOCCER LEAGUE

Final Series Rd 10

No.	Team	GP	W	D	L	Streak	GF	GA	Pts
1	Perth Glory	10	8	0	2	L1	27	7	27
2	Olympic Sharks	10	4	1	5	W1	17	14	19
3	Adelaide City Force	10	5	2	3	W1	19	14	17
4	Parramatta Power	10	3	4	3	L1	16	21	13
5	Northern Spirit	9	2	2	5	L1	7	22	8
6	Newcastle United	9	2	1	6	W2	9	17	7

NEWCASTLE UNITED

(A Hughes 23')

PERTH GLORY

Referee: Con Diomis. Crowd: 3,301. Venue: Energy Australia Stadium.

Teams: NEWCASTLE UNITED: Willis, Thomas, Bingley, Baillie, R. Griffiths, Hughes (J Griffiths 70'), Schirripa (Roberts 73'), Masi (Moreira 82'), Johnson, A Griffiths, Middleby.

Subs Not Used: McPherson, Kennedy (gk).

PERTH GLORY: Matassa, Danze, Mrdja, Despotovski, Byrnes, Mouhouti, Junior, Faria (Hassell 74'), Pryce, Caceras, Coyne.

Subs Not Used: Horsley, Miller.

Cautions: A Hughes (NU) 60'.

1



Studs Up - Glory's Adrian Caceras shown biffing it out with Newcastle's Mitchell Johnson.

PLAYER OF THE WEEK



ANTE MILICIC
Olympic Sharks

What more can you say about one of Australia's most talented marksmen.

Olympic Sharks striker Ante Milicic showed that class and persistence was the key in his squads eventful three-one win over the Parramatta Power that all but assured the side a place in this years Grand-Final against the Perth Glory this coming Sunday in Perth.

His two strikes and a number of wonderful touches and flicks on a tough Toyota Park surface only made sure that he will be one marked man come finals time.

The unpredictable striker was the sole goalscorer in last year's final against the Glory and will no doubt be in the same frame of mind to do it again this year

OLYMPIC SHARKS

(J Harris 36', A Milicic 64' pen, 74'

PARRAMATTA POWER

(Buonavoglia 9')

Referee: Eddie Lennie. Crowd: 1,944. Venue: Toyota Park.

Teams: OLYMPIC SHARKS: Bolton, Kohler, Juric, Sroj (Porter 35'), Podeljak (Durante 75'), Milicic, Halpin, North, Harris (Parisi 65'), Packer, Ishida.

Subs Not Used: Souris, Hughes (gk).

PARRAMATTA POWER: Vukovic, Ceccoli, Beauchamp, Thompson, O'Sullivan, Cardozo (Salapassis 65'), Brown (Brownlie 75'), O'Grady, Zorbas (Renaud 75'), Buonavoglia, Elrich.

Subs Not Used: Maloney, Carman (gk).

Cautions: M Beauchamp (PP) 43'; A Ceccoli (PP) 76'.

3



Troy Halpin shown challenging Peter Zorbas for the ball during last week's match that ended in the Sharks favour three-one.

ADELAIDE CITY FORCE

(L Pantelis 25', S Smeltz 42', S Tunbridge 49', 58', I Fyfe 67', 90')

NORTHERN SPIRIT

0



Force players celebrate their six-nil romp over the Northern Spirit in last week's final series match.

LEADING GOALSCORERS

Name	Club	Total
DESPOTOVSKI Bobby	Perth Glory	12
MILICIC Ante	Olympic Sharks	8
MORI Damian	Perth Glory	7
PELOSI Claudio	Adelaide City Force	4
SMETZ Shane	Adelaide City Force	4
CARDOZO Pablo	Parramatta Power	3
DODD Travis	Newcastle United	3
O'GRADY Paul	Parramatta Power	3
PARISI Franco	Olympic Sharks	3



GRAND FINAL FIXTURE
Perth Glory v Olympic Sharks
at Subiaco Oval 1-6-2003 kick-off 1pm



Olympic Sharks: 3 Parramatta Power: 1

Defending champions ensure

Grand Final rematch in Perth

By Peter Damalas

It went into the very last round of the championship series, but the Olympic Sharks ensured a second successive Grand Final appearance in Perth against the Glory this Sunday afternoon.

In a dramatic final day of the new top six format, the defending champions cast off a sluggish start to the match in horrendous conditions, and did enough to send the poor crowd of 2,000 home dreaming of back to back titles.

The win was a massive relief to a club that had struggled in the final third of the season, and had failed to secure a coveted Grand Final berth in the past two outings, when a solitary point was adequate.

With Adelaide City in rampant mood at home against the lacklustre Northern Spirit, the pressure was on Lee Sterrey and his team to defeat Parramatta Power, who also had a mathematical chance of stealing a place in Perth at the start of Round 10.

The win was by no means spectacular, and this team of immense individual talent did enough, and no more. But the outcome was of the most importance, and star striker Ante Milicic, who scored the winning goal in last season's decider, was on hand again to put the issue beyond doubt.

In previous weeks, Olympic have played a great deal better and come away empty handed, but they were not to be denied this time.

Coach Lee Sterrey paid tribute to the improved psychological status of his side.

"The players showed desperation this evening, and in big games like this, 95% of the game is played from the neck up" he said. "We're there [Grand Final], and that's the most important thing".

After a rather slow, and surprisingly pas-

sionless start to the game, predicted by Olympic captain Ante Juric during the week, it was Parramatta that struck the first blow in the ninth minute when John Buonavoglia rounded off a well worked move with an excellent finish.

On a quick break, young midfielder Matt Thompson crossed the ball from the right touchline, towards the pint sized striker, who eluded the attention of the Olympic defence, and slotted home with the inside of the foot past Clint Bolton.

At this stage, Parramatta were half way through their part of the bargain in the hope of stealing second place. A win by two goals and a draw or loss by Adelaide City was the equation for the Power.

In truth, both sides were sitting back in defence and attempting to work on the counter attack, and the selection of midfielder, Peter Zorbas in place of forward, Kosta Salapasis, for the away side, was a statement from coach Theodorakopoulos that the key area in the fixture was midfield.

The opening goal proved to be a serious test of character for the beleaguered defending champions, and with little atmosphere at the ground to spur them on, they were looking wayward as Buonavoglia threatened to push the game beyond their reach.

In the 22nd minute, he was put in behind the defence on the left wing, and his clipped cross towards the centre found his teammate Thompson, whose header was deflected away for a corner.

Two minutes later, left wing back Damien Brown blasted across the face of goal after a knock down on the edge of the penalty box.

Ten minutes later, another brilliant run turned the last defender inside out before his effort was saved by Bolton. A follow up volley from Cardozo was blocked for a corner.

It took an inspired substitution in the first half to waken Olympic from their slumber. Wayne Srhoj was brought off, and livewire Joel Porter introduced to add some direction and variety to the attack.

He was immediately on the ball, and a minute after entering the field of play, Porter crossed the ball from the left to Jeremy Harris, whose powerful downward header gave Danny Vukovic in the Parramatta goal no chance. "It was a big call taking of Srhoj, who is the anchor in our midfield. But at zero-one, you've got to take a punt" Sterrey said.

With Troy Halpin coming into his own in terms of distribution from midfield, Olympic grew in confidence as the first half drew to a close.

However, the driving rain began to play a central part in the match, and the home side found themselves trapped within their own half due to the wind and rain pouring against them.

Eight minutes after the restart, former Olympic golden boy, Pablo Cardozo, forced Bolton into a tremendous fingertip save on the far post from a direct free kick, which the striker bent around the defensive wall.

Two minutes later, left wing back Damien Brown blasted across the face of goal after a knock down on the edge of the penalty box.

Olympic were to escape for a third time in the second half after they lost possession in the centre circle. Parramatta had three players in advanced positions to Olympic's two defenders, but Juric and Kohler managed to defy the odds and keep the ball out of the net.

First, the captain shielded the vulnerable goal mouth with Buonavoglia bearing down on goal, then Kohler reacted instantly to a Cardozo volley to produce a miracle save.

This proved to be the turning point in the match, and Olympic had the chance to take the lead from their very next foray upfield.

Tom Podeljak found himself goal side of Wayne O'Sullivan, and fell to the ground after an innocuous clip. Referee Eddie Lennie watched the linesman's signal, and pointed to the penalty spot. Milicic took the opportunity gratefully, and converted the penalty kick.

In the 73rd minute, Milicic further compounded the away side's agony when he pounced on a fumble by Vukovic for a simple tap in, making the score 3-1.

The supporters and the players began to see the Grand Final on the horizon, but given Olympic's unfortunate habit of giving away late goals, Sterrey brought on an extra defender, Andrew Durante, in place of Tom Podeljak. The two second half goals were enough to see off a brave Parramatta Power outfit, after a long season which has seen the club make tremendous strides on the field.

Nick Theodorakopoulos described the campaign as "excellent", and insisted that his team were in the running until the very end.

He admitted though that the players had all but given up after the score from Hindmarsh Stadium was announced shortly after the Sharks took the lead. In congratulating Olympic, the coach pointed out the role of the goalkeeper (Clint Bolton) and Perth Glory's Jason Petkovic, in the success of the respective Grand Finalists, and mentioned that he will seek to address the goalkeeping situation at Parramatta.

The away team would rue the points dropped at home against the Northern Spirit and Adelaide City in the previous two weeks.

This week's finale has thrown up a number of delicious stories. Perth Glory have the perfect opportunity to avenge two home losses in the Grand Final, while Olympic may yet complete an unpredictable season by snatching the title.

While the current finals format will more than likely be discontinued for the 2003-2004 season, it has been an interesting experiment, as Adelaide City and Parramatta were pipped at the post by Olympic.

In preparation for the Grand Final, Sterrey will train the players lightly, and the squad will fly across the Western Australia on Thursday. Striker Jeremy Harris remains the only injury concern.



Joel Porter (Right) played an instrumental role in his side's three-one against the Power last week.



Ante Milicic shown scoring the third and final goal for the Sharks that booked their tickets to this year's grand-final showdown against the Glory this Sunday.



NSL Finals Series Round 10



Newcastle United

1



Perth Glory

0

Newcastle downs Perth in NSL

Newcastle United ended their National Soccer League season on a high after downing a spare parts Perth Glory team 1-0 at EnergyAustralia Stadium.

It was a game of no consequence and the Glory, who'll play in next Sunday's grand final at Subiaco Oval, treated it as such, resting nine regular first team players.

Only striker Bobby Despotovski and defender Shane Pryce took the field in what was essentially a training exercise for both clubs.

Despotovski looked to have got the visitors off to a bright start when he found the back of the net in the ninth minute but was ruled offside by referee Con Diomis.

From that point it was Newcastle who dominated, keen to end an otherwise miserable finals series - that



Scotty Thomas shown tackling Glory's young striker Adrian Caceres during last week's finals series encounter.



Glory's Dutch import Mohammed Mouhouti shown keeping a close eye on Newcastle's Esala Masi.



Newcastle's promising young midfielder Mitchell Johnson (Right) shown tracking Glory's sharpshooter Nick Mrdja.



Adelaide City Force

6



Northern Spirit

0

City fail despite six-goal effort

ADELAIDE CITY thumped Northern Spirit at Hindmarsh Stadium last Sunday night but still failed to snare a NSL grand final berth.

Olympic Sharks' 3-1 win over Parramatta Power ensured a grand final re-match with Perth and overshadowed the Force's five finals wins, second only to the Glory.

Young striker Scott Tunbridge and Olyroo defender Iain Fyfe netted second half doubles to steer City to their biggest win of the season.

Stylish winger Lucas Pantelis set the Force on track with an opening goal in the 25th minute and terrorised the Spirit defence to set up the second for Kiwi striker Shane Smeltz just before the break.

But it proved insufficient to win the Force a record sixth NSL grand final appearance, despite a four-goal deluge after half-time.

The result would only have mattered if Olympic had at least drawn.

Adelaide City looked at sea in attack early with leading striker Claudio Pelosi sitting on the bench with a foot injury.

But a crucial save by keeper Louie Acevski from Spirit's John Hutchinson in the 23rd minute seemed to jolt City into overdrive.

Pantelis ignited the home side by tucking away an Aurelio Vidmar cross and then swung in a ball which Carl Veart missed before Smeltz struck truly with a low follow-up drive.



Kiwi international Shane Smeltz celebrated his fourth goal in this year's final series.

Zoran Matic's team didn't let up and Tunbridge chimed in with two close range goals in the 49th minute and 58th minutes which gave the Force a fleeting chance at a grand final spot.

Tunbridge volleyed home a header from Fyfe after a Pantelis cross and then headed home a pinpoint cross at the far post from Goran Lozanovski for his brace.

Then stylish defender Fyfe took centre stage.

Former Socceroo Lozanovski again provided the pressure cross from the left which Fyfe hooked low into the net from close range in the 68th minute for a 5-0 lead.

Spirit kept up a brave front and made Acevski make another couple of saves but Fyfe had the final word on a season when former coach Matic was asked to take over as caretaker in late December to rescue the Force's season.

An under-23 national squad member, Fyfe popped up in the penalty area in the 90th minute to volley home a cross from Tunbridge to seal the lopsided victory.

Adelaide City's caretaker coach Zoran Matic said his side's tilt at a grand final spot was lost in their 3-1 week six finals defeat at the hands of the Olympic Sharks.

"We've only got ourselves to blame," he said.

"All we needed was to draw that away match in Sydney and we should have after leading 1-0 but we lost our heads."

Matic said he had nothing to celebrate despite the 6-0 win and his players felt the same.

"It's an empty feeling we have now," he said.

"I've always had high expectations but I know sometimes you can't reach them."

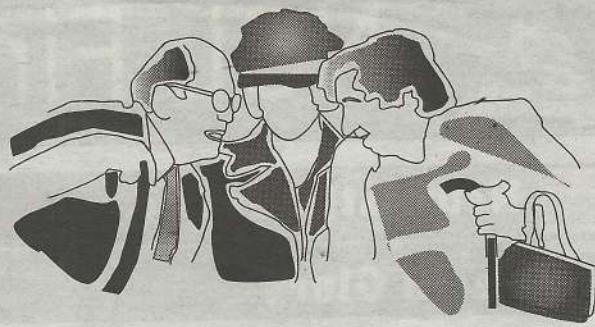
Matic said he was undecided about carrying on as City coach next season.



Scott Tunbridge bagged a brace in Adelaide's huge win.

From the dressing sheds

by Mark Stavroulakis



WHO WANTS A COACHING JOB?

Who wants to coach in the National League? For quite some time now that has been the burning question to a number of readers in these past few months. It is no secret that a number of clubs have already plotted their views on signing on a new coach, the question is who will get there?

Both Victorian clubs South Melbourne and the Melbourne Knights, Wollongong Wolves, Brisbane Strikers, Sydney United and the Marconi Stallions have already confirmed their interests in gaining a new mentor for next season.

There's also been no real assurance as of yet of any of the other current National League coaches who have stated their desire to stay on in the league next season.

A number of out of work coaches have handed in their resumes to these respective clubs hoping they get their chance to guide a club in Australia's elite league.

How long will these coaches last though?

If it was any indication from this season that just past, coaches beware, a string of losses will put you out of a job once more.

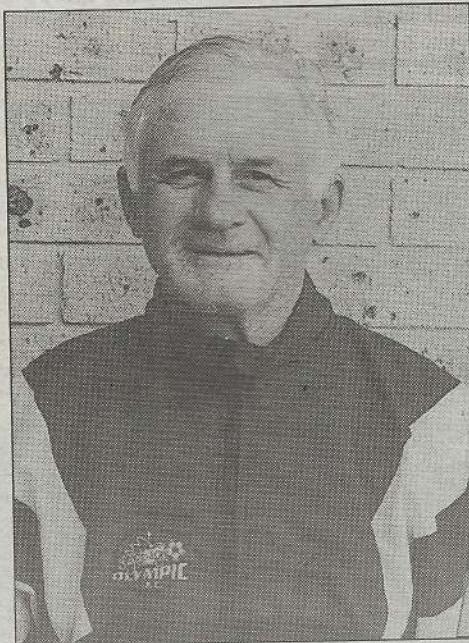
AROK SAYS GOOD BYE

Former Socceroo coach Frank Arok will say good bye and bid farewell to Australia on the 15th of June as he and his wife Gordana trek back to their hometown in Novi Sad to spend more time with their only daughter and grandchildren.

The Yugoslav-Hungarian's career as coach of Australia started in 1983 where the 71-year-old led the green and golds to failed bids to reach the World Cup in '85 and '89.

Having coached St George and being involved in both the Olympic Sharks and Perth Glory youth set-ups, Arok did his best to pioneer soccer in Australia.

Anyone that had the chance to see or be apart of Arok's squad would have noticed the amount of passion this man had to the world game.



Frank Arok: Former Socceroo coach will say good-bye to Australia and head back home.

Australia has benefited greatly from the likes of the Arok's and Rale Rasic's in terms of coaching in this country.

The only way is up for Australian football, and the time is now for a change in helping the best sport in the world progress in this country.

REMEMBER HEIDELBERG UNITED?

Victorian side Heidelberg United look set to mount a serious campaign towards getting back to the Victorian Premier League as the club has hired the services of a number of experienced campaigners.

Currently battling in Victoria's second division, the side has names such as former Gippsland Falcons keeper Jim Kourtis and player Steve Mangos, Ex



Con Boutsianis: Heidelberg United's new star.

Melbourne Knights stars Damien Vojtek and the 'ice man' Ice Kutelovski, and finally the former South Melbourne duo of Vas Kalogeracos and Con Boutsianis.

The celebrity names don't stop there, former Knights coach Vlado Vanis is currently pulling the strings at the club who hope to one day gain entry to Australia's elite competition.

Just to show the readers what an impact Con Boutsianis had since his arrival at the club, the talented left footer bagged a hat-trick in his first match last week against Thomastown where the Bergers won three-two.

Expect to see more goals from one of the best ever marksman in Australia.

MELBOURNE KNIGHTS NAME NOMINEES FOR TEAM OF THE CENTURY

The Melbourne Knights Soccer Club this year celebrates its 50th anniversary, and in the lead up to the upcoming 2003 / 2004 NSL season, and consequently its 20th NSL season, the celebrations are set to begin in earnest.

The major highlight of the year will undoubtedly be the clubs celebratory Gala night which will be held at the Atrium Ballroom on the 21st June 2003 and the announcement of the clubs team of the century that same evening.

A panel of six judges have been burning the midnight oil and every record book available in the process, in order to compile a who's who of the clubs sporting greats and then narrowing the selection down to 33 player and 2 coaching nominee's.

Chaired by Frank Burin, the panel which included

Sports Journalists Roy Hay, Peter Desira, Craig Mc Kenzie and past players such as Dujo Zemunic and Ivan Roso completed the list of nominations late last week.

Having submitted the list to the Board of Directors at the Knights, it is with pleasure that I announce the following nominee's.

Melbourne Knights Team of The Century Nominee's:-

Keith Adams	Mirko Kovacek
Bozo Basic	Ante Kuzelek
Mirko Bazic (COACH)	Andrew Marth (pictured)
Ante Bilaver	Billy McArthur
Joe Biskic	Bill McIntyre
Peter Blasby	Jimmy McKay
David Cervinski	Hammy McMeechan
Adrian Cervinski	David Miller
Tommy Cumming	Branko Milosevic
Fausto DeAmicis	Ken Murphy
John Gardiner	Tom Podeljak
Steve Gojevic	Horst Rau
Ivan Gruicic	Joe Simunic
George Hannah	Mark Talajic
Steve Horvat	Danny Tiatto
Ivan Kelic	Mark Viduka
Michael Kis (COACH)	Billy Vojtek
Steve Kokoska	

The final team will be announced on the evening of the 21st June 2003, and the club has received confirmation the both Danny Tiatto and Joe Simunic will be in attendance, with Mark Viduka's confirmation expected within the next few days.

CROOKIE RE-SIGNS WITH NEWCASTLE

One coach that has been assured a place in next season's National League is current Newcastle United 'gaffa' Ian Crook.

It is believed that Crook signed a three-year deal with the side.

The board of Newcastle took the time out to reassess the former English international's position at the club last week and came to the conclusion that they will renew his contract.

Crook had done the unthinkable this season guiding his injured side towards this season's finals series.

Having had suspensions or injuries, Newcastle proved many wrong by making the top six.

Imagine if these players were fit and ready?

MIND GAMES PLEASE

During last Thursday afternoon's NSL Finals series media conference held in the halls of Wentworth Park in Sydney, mind games were certainly in the air thanks to Power coach Nick Theo.

The meeting was to start at 1pm with both the Power and Sharks players and coaching staff present.

To everyone's surprise, only one side showed up.

The Shark duo of coach Lee Sterrey and captain Ante Juric was the only sight the media saw at the start of the conference casting doubts as to whether the Power boys would show up.

Alas, half an hour into the meeting, coach Nick Theo and Power captain Alvin Cecoli appeared much to the dismay of many of the journalists present.

Mind games - I think so!

TARKA TRACKED

Perth Glory's tenacious young defender David Tarka looks set to embark on a new career next season in the Premier League.

Many scouts have been alerted to the Young Socceroo's presence who hopes to one day play in the English Premier League.

Relegated First Division English side West Ham have been one of the leaders in signing Tarka but the Perth born star has refused a move anywhere until the end of the Grand Final.

A number of European clubs have been believed to be chasing the former AIS graduate.

Meanwhile, Glory CEO Jeff Dennis has revealed the club had sold all but 12 of 276 corporate boxes for the grand final.

photooftheweek



No love lost shown here between Olympiakos and Panathinaikos players during their fierce derby encounter played a few weeks back.

The pair have forever had a rivalry that could rank amongst the most passionate in the world.

During the game, on and off the pitch, a num-

ber battles broke out between players and sets of supporters.

Greece's Red Devils Olympiakos ran out eventual winners, three-nil and have all but secured their seventh consecutive Greek title - an amazing achievement.



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NSW PREMIER LEAGUE 2002/03 FINALS SERIES PRELIMINARY FINAL



Blacktown City Demons



Bonnyrigg White Eagles

Blacktown win 8-7 on penalties

1
1

By Greg Stock

Blacktown City made it through to their sixth straight Grand Final appearance, emerging victorious from a penalty kick showdown with arch rival Bonnyrigg White Eagles.

With scores locked 1-1 at the end of extra time,

the game was decided from the penalty spot, Demons goalkeeper John Crawley denying Joe Bruni in a nail biting finale.

"I'm absolutely ecstatic for the team" said coach Brian Brown following the win. "Penalty shootouts are never pleasant, someone has to win and someone has to lose. Commiseration's to Bonnyrigg but I was always confident that John Crawley had two saves in him, and he came up trumps."



Blacktown eventually prevailed on penalties after a action pack encounter at the Gabbie Stadium.

Bruni's kick was number eighteen in the shootout. With the scoreboard reading 8-7, it all hung on his left boot. While the shot itself was struck solidly and looked destined for the net, Crawley jumped early, deflecting the ball with enough force to push it onto the post and keep it out.

But, in retrospect, the penalty shootout should never have been allowed to happen - the White Eagles forwards should have taken their chances earlier on.

Their inability to finish again cost the Bonnyrigg the chance of another Grand Final appearance. Aaron Burgess put away their only goal of the game in the 17th minute when he met a Kindness Agwu cross from wide on the right at the back post, their only return from three quality chances in the first fifteen minutes.

Again early in the second half, Crawley had to pull off some heroic saves to keep the scoresheet as one as Burgess, Shane Knight and Michael Hawrysiuk all squandered good opportunities with all bar the goalkeeper to beat.

Using the full width of the pitch to stretch the Demons defence, Agwu and Knight were the chief destroyers as the continually found space down either flank.

Their failure to convert was made evident when Blacktown manufactured an equaliser in the final minute of regulation time, defender Damien Foxe meeting a short cross from Simon Catanzaro in a sea of players. His header wasn't pretty, but was effective in beating Fernando Greco to send the match into extra time.

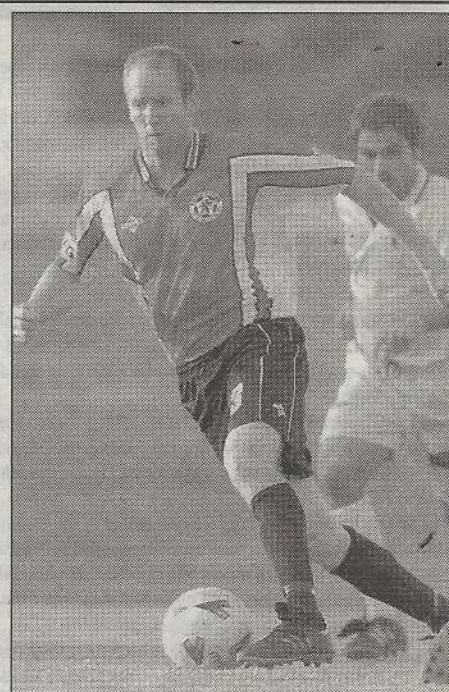
"If you don't score goals, you don't deserve to win" said a very disappointed Ljube Jancev. "We had four good one on one chances tonight and we score one goal. In pressure games like this your return has to better and sadly for us it wasn't."

While Bonnyrigg did struggle up front, their defence did a sterling job of keeping the Demons to just the one goal. So often maligned as being inferior, they stood up to be counted. Bobby Dragas was the standout alongside D'Alessandro and Pellegrino.

Blacktown on the other hand, struggled and their performance was nowhere near what we are used to expecting from their well-credentialled side. Since their last gasp loss to Bonnyrigg in round twenty, the wheels look to have fallen off the Demons juggernaut.

With Colin Luff and Luke Roodenberg being well marked, they struggled to mount significant pressure. It took a brave substitution from Brown to revitalise his side, throwing defender Dane Hokin into the unfamiliar role as striker to create a contest. Shifting Simon Catanzaro forward, they seemed to have a little more direction, culminating in the equaliser.

"Sometimes performances in these big games doesn't matter, and while we didn't play all that well for the whole game, I thought we did enough



Blacktown captain Damian Foxe scored the last minute equaliser against Bonnyrigg.

to keep ourselves in the game," said Brown.

"It's typical of the character of these boys that when the chips are down they come out firing and they did just that."

His counterpart philosophical. "I am very proud of my boys, they did exceptionally well and were unlucky to fall at the very last. That's not Joe's (Bruni) fault but the teams' collectively. We played good soccer but on the day we just weren't good enough."

BLACKTOWN CITY DEMONS 1

(Damien Foxe 90')

BONNYRIGG WHITE EAGLES 1

(Aaron Burgess 17')

8-7 on Penalties

at Gabbie Stadium, Seven Hills.

BLACKTOWN CITY: 1.John Crawley, 3.Damien Foxe, 4.Luke Roodenberg (13.Steven Riches 55'), 5.Ben Willard (15.Patrick Gatti 91'), 6.David Reid, 7.Simon Catanzaro, 8/19.Dion Valle, 11.Jimmy Nikas, 10.Naoki Imaya, 9.Kain Rastall, 18.Colin Luff (12.Dane Hokin 58').
Coach: Brian Brown.

BONNYRIGG WHITE EAGLES: 1.Fernando 'Greco', 3.Mark D'Alessandro, 5.Tayfun Devrimol, 6.Bobby Dragas, 8.David Harding, 9.Shane Knight, 10.Kindness Agwu (7.Javier Mancino 85'), 16.Michael Hawrysiuk (11.Joe Bruni 91'), 18.Fernando Pellegrino, 21.Aaron Burgess (12.Zlatko Donev 97'), 23.Devrim Huseyin.
Coach: Ljube Jancev.

Cautions: Rastall (bc) 40' Dragas (bwe) 60' Imaya (bc) 77' Riches (bc) 94'

Referee: Vic Gauci
Assistant Referees: Attila Stibinger and Terry Goodhew
Fourth Official: Jim Nicolaou.

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NSW PREMIER LEAGUE 2002/03 FINALS SERIES

HEAD TO HEAD

WITH PAUL GOODWIN

Blacktown City Demons v A.P.I.A.-Leichhardt Tigers

1 John Crawley

Crawley has been in sensational touch of late and there is no question that his many saves already in the finals, series to date have been crucial to the Demons reaching their sixth consecutive Grand Final. Once at Colo Colo in Chile, as a full time professional, Crawley took over from Fernando Greco when that man moved to Bonnyrigg and has not put a foot wrong ever since.

3 Damien Foxe

Foxy has been injury plagued over recent seasons, but is powerful in the air and tough to beat on the ground. He's the older brother to Portsmouth Star Hayden Foxe. Proved his worth by netting the headed equaliser last weekend that carried his side into extra time and ultimately the Grand Final.

5 Ben Willard

Once of Stanmore Hawks and Macarthur, Willard is a quality defender and another who is a long time Blacktown man. He gets forward well and contributes solidly in the midfield when required. Also troubled by injuries this term, Ben will be a starter for sure, despite picking up a knock last weekend.

8 Dione Valle

Originally spotted at Macarthur Rams, having earlier been a Chile youth international, Valle later went off to Perth Glory to become a regular in the Western Australian NSL side. His term at Blacktown has been a great success and he is another to blend in as if he has always been a Demon, which is far from true.

6 David Reid

The stylish Reid was for long a key member of the Bonnyrigg side and was most influential there, but was first signed at Macarthur Rams where he excelled alongside brother Paul who is now at Bradford City in the UK. Reid has an exaggerated running style, which makes him stand out, but his ability to score goals and make them, too, give him an edge over many other central midfielders and make him stand out from the pack even more.

7 Simon Catanzaro

This former Northern Spirit junior has been a great success at The Gabbie Stadium where he has built a reputation as a deep-lying striker or attacking midfielder, with penalty kicks his specialty. Catanzaro has been an integral member of the Demons squad this term. Catanzaro has plundered no fewer than 13 goals this season.

9 Kain Rastall

Another of the ex Macarthur brigade and ex Sydney United to boot, Rastall is something of a quiet achiever with his methodical approach and all round good flank play and midfield work-rate invaluable to his club, which he joined several seasons back now. Rastall bobs up with goals and assists all the time, but he is yet another to be branded, quite accurately, as a 'players' player'.

10 Naoki Imaya

Naoki continues to impress and improve, as well as develop, under the watchful eye of a thoughtful boss in Brian Brown. Imaya, once of Eastern Suburbs and Canberra Cosmos, has cemented a place in the Demons side as a player who has a free role both in attack as well as defence. He can score vital goals, make telling tackles at the other end moments later and yet never stops running, tackling, probing from the midfield and generally breathing fire. Sure to be a star on this occasion as always and his own family fan club will be among his many admirers as usual.

11 Jimmy Nikas

Dynamic winger Wee Jimmy has become a great hit at The Gabbie and now in his second season has become an automatic choice down the left flank. Possessed of both speed and tenacity coupled with rat cunning, Nikas scores goals and creates them, which make him a very handy asset indeed and a fixture in the Demons, side these days.

18 Colin Luff

Big Luffy moved across to Blacktown a few rounds into the season, after a long spell at Bonnyrigg had led to a shorter spell at Bankstown, where he scored many times in the winter Super League, but found it much tougher back in the Premier League under Lee Sterrey at Jensen Park. Often Luff grabs his goals in twos and threes and has not scored since the Central Coast win over a month ago.

4 Luke Roodenburg

Roods moved in from Parramatta Power last season and has settled in well, but occasionally the 21 year old loses form in a game and needs to be freshened up. His attitude as a team player has always gone down well with his coach, it must be said. Taken off against Bonnyrigg in last week's Preliminary Final, along with fellow striker Luff, Roodenburg could well choose the Grand Final to hit his straps.

2 Dane Hokin

Signed last season from Central Coast, where he was a stand-out defender, Hokin has been a regular at Blacktown, but has also enjoyed much success as an impact player too. Hokin is big and strong in defence but also chimes in with goals when pushed forward and lets opposition players know he is around. Expect another big game from this talented and still emerging player.

15 Patrick Gatt

Gatty has been a solid defender at the club having come through the youth side and established himself at senior level. Gatt may not get a start here but he is one member of the squad whose worth cannot be underestimated or undervalued. Should circumstances dictate he is likely to be called on to tighten things up at the back this weekend.

13 Steve Riches

One time Leyton Orient and Kings Lynn flanker Riches is another of Blacktown's long serving players, now a veteran of Grand Finals, football and familiar with success. He is cool on the ball, tough in the tackle, smart with his crosses from the left and a deadly penalty and free kick taker. Could well figure at the finish of this major fixture if not at the beginning.

16 Roger Galayini

Another of the young brigade who have been used sparingly so far but have immense potential. Galayini came on in the Bonnyrigg game and looked the part. A Grand Final medal would be a great reward for a player who has been sitting on the bench for the Demons of late and can obviously be relied upon to do the job when called upon.

20 Matthew Burrows (RGK)

Staying in the shadow of big John Crawley, Burrows is sure to have learned heaps from Crawley in his time at The Gabbie. Would prove a valuable understudy and certainly one for the future.

Coach: Brian Brown

Brian Brown has enjoyed immediate success at The Gabbie having moved there from a previous post as assistant to Lawrie McKinna at NSW First Division outfit Hills United. Blacktown have reached their sixth consecutive Grand Final and Brown has been at the helm for most of them. Coming originally from Scotland, Bomber was a successful NSL and Victorian State League player before moving to NSW where he quickly established his reputation as a coach of some quality. Having annexed the Premiership this season he is going for the double again and facing a new opponent in Apia-Leichhardt, a team that he respects, but certainly does not fear.

1 Bob Catlin

The big man has never played better and at 37 shows no sign of slowing down. A Grand Final winning medal might be enough to put the finishing touch to a career that has seen the custodian make his way from Apia via Maply-Warringah, Marconi, Notts County, and Newcastle Breakers all the way back to Apia again last season.

17 Paul Dee

Fleet footed Paul Dee, a Sydney Olympic player in his youth, the 28 year old had been spotted at Dulwich Hill and has always been a key player at his many clubs since which include Canberra Cosmos, Bonnyrigg White Eagles and Blacktown City, who he faces today. A full back who gets forward whenever possible.

3 Josip Moric

Big Joe, brother of midfielder, Ante, has been a huge success at Apia in his two seasons there after a long spell at Sydney United. Moric, just turned 25, is fast and strong and fearless in the tackle, and in the air. Can get in behind the full backs and put over a telling cross when needed.

4 Ross Kethel

Ross has been at the club since moving in from Ryde City where his coach De Celis had big plans for him. Still only 22, this defender has stepped in when called upon and done a valuable job. A Grand Final appearance would certainly be a highlight in a career that is developing very nicely now.

15 Damon Langan (C)

A complete player and a complete captain Langan had been at Blacktown for many years before making the move to A.P.I.A. this season. He was Demons captain in the past and has assumed that role at Lambert Park too. "Langers, 31, can play defence or midfield and is a penalty ace as well as being capable of scoring in general play.

16 Tony Tesoro

Tony is a great club man, a defender and midfieler of the highest calibre who has stood out in recent games with his immense heart and club spirit as well as wonderful marking skills. A first medal for the 28 year old would be very well deserved and popular at the club he has served so well for so long.

18 Ante Moric

A left footer who adds a lot to the attack when he gets forward, Moric came into the side this season after being at Sydney United for some years. He has become a regular in a side that has changed little throughout a successful season. Sure to make his presence felt the 29 year old scores important goals in key matches which makes him a huge asset.

5 Marcus Stergiopoulos

A tremendous character, Stergyboy, as he is affectionately known, came to the club from Northern Spirit, who had released him after he had joined them from the Football Kingz. Stergyboy, 28, is the joker in the pack who was captain, until his trip to the UK to trial with Mansfield Town, that earned him a contract at the 3rd Division club this year.

7 Sam La Rocca

Another great club man who joined from Fairfield Bulls three seasons back and was captain for much of that time. Sam is still young enough to consider this his Grand Final debut as the first of many. Fast and aggressive, this 25 year old is possessed of terrific drive and a fierce shot this very capable midfieler is enjoying yet another excellent season.

8 James Stubbs-Mills

Stubbsy is another to be making his debut in the big one but had much success in the past with both Manly-Warringah Dolphins and Ryde City. Tenacious in the tackle, a central midfieler of high renown who spent some time honing his skills at Northern Spirit young James can be expected to be one of the most influential players on the pitch on Saturday night.

6 Michael Galluzzo

Galluzzo, 24, is an Apia boy through and through and one of the better readers of the game at the Lambert Park club where he has been plagued by niggling injuries this term. Galluzzo is equally at home in midfieler or defence and sure to figure in the game at some stage or other and another who is ultra keen to pick up his first medal.

13 Norman Tome

Stormin' Norman, now 30, moved in part way through the season. Originally at Dulwich Hill under the redoubtable Agenor Muniz Tome tasted much success at Sydney Olympic before moving on to Marconi. Now a striker who can finish off anything he also moves well from deeper lying positions as well like most of Les De Celis, players these days.

12 Jeremy Brown

Jeremy came into the side last season from New Zealand and was an instant success. The 26 year old has not recaptured last season's form but is still a very valuable squad member who defends with gusto and also gets forward well down the flanks. Can be depended on to come on and do a job as required which is his likely role this time too.

9 Zlatko Arambasic

Arambasic who featured at Canterbury-Marrickville before heading overseas to 9 Belgium where he was a regular at Mechelen came back to Australia to link with Sydney United. A header of the ball with few peers this 33 year old went close to winning the Golden Boot this season with a total of thirteen goals he is bound to be firing for this one.

14 John-Paul Boutros

A wide player who came to the club from Ryde City John-Paul is a youngster that the club has high hopes for and is dedicated to the cause. This 21 year old has great ability on the flanks and can be a big shock or impact player. Expected to start from the bench, but nothing is certain yet.

11 Ryan Jones

Youngster Jones, another who is just 22, is coming on very well and being used sparingly due to injuries and the all round experience already at the club. He is a winger and midfieler who defends with relish and gets the ball over nicely from the bylines.

10 Steve Karavataki

A one time Dulwich Hill striker who played briefly at Sydney Olympic and Wollongong City Karavataki has been at the club even before De Celis arrived and has been the club's leading scorer several times. His goals are not as frequent these days but his work rate is just as good and his ability and experience is invaluable. A real "confidence player", who, when on-song, can be unstoppable when in sight of goal.

20 Murray Nelson

A goalkeeper who is very highly rated at the club, but rarely called upon, due to the sound form and fitness of the regular custodians at the club, Nelson, at just 21, has a big future in the game and it could well be at A.P.I.A. next season.

Coach: Les de Celis

A former goalkeeper at NSW First Division Blacktown United De Celis went on to coach the Tangerines some years ago before moving to an assistant's post at Super League North Shore United. Then Les went on to Gladesville-Hornsby before settling in at Ryde City and guiding them to two promotions winding up with a Super League berth, as the Premier League was known in those days. A.P.I.A.-Leichhardt has not been out of the finals race since de Celis took over from Arno Bertogna three seasons back and the coach has put his own individual stamp on the club in his time at Lambert Park. This is his and the club's first Premier League Grand Final appearance.





SOCER NSW



NSW PREMIER LEAGUE GRAND FINAL PREVIEW

By Greg Stock

Before we start on the Grand Final preview, it's probably apt to reflect on one of the best games of football seen in the country this year.

I say without hesitation that if we get a Grand Final half as good as the Blacktown v Bonnyrigg match from last weekend we'll be in football heaven. While the game did have a couple of ordinary patches, fans of both persuasions had their hearts in the mouth as the second half and two periods of extra time produced some absolutely outstanding football.

Like two prize fighters going punch for punch it was sad that there had to be a loser, but in the end it was the tragedy of penalties. Blacktown goalkeeper John Crawley made himself a hero by saving the shot that took his side to the Grand Final.



Blacktown's John Crawley helped his side into the Grand Final with a pair of penalty saves in the Preliminary Final.

NSW PREMIER LEAGUE GRAND FINAL

A.P.I.A.-Leichhardt Tigers vs Blacktown City Demons
6:00pm Lambert Park, Leichhardt
Saturday May 31st

NSW Premier League Under 19 Grand Final

Blacktown City Demons vs Bonnyrigg White Eagles
3:30pm Lambert Park, Leichhardt
Saturday May 31st

Given that we now have our two Finalists, who will it be? Will the side that scores the all-important first goal take the game, or will we have the drama charged environment of extra time and penalties. One thing is certain, that in the small confines of historical Lambert Park, the stage is set for a game which will bring the spectators close to the action creating the perfect atmosphere for both sides to play at their very best.

Having lost the Minor Premiership with a couple of mid season slipups, A.P.I.A. made amends by beating Bonnyrigg in the Preliminary Semi-Final in week one of the post season, before beating Blacktown City 2-1 in the Major Semi-Final to clinch home field advantage.

Boasting a very experienced side with a number of former NSL players, A.P.I.A. have returned to form with a vengeance and are more than capable of racking up a big scoreline with an army of strikers and attacking midfielders.

"Our preparation leading into the game has been ideal," said striker Steve Karavataki. "We had a couple of good session after our trip ten pin bowling last weekend and we don't have any real concerns on the injury front so we'll be at our absolute best."

The major talking point in the leadup to the match will surround the A.P.I.A. starting lineup. Will coach Les De Celis resist temptation and name an unchanged lineup or will he make a couple of positional changes?

The most likely could be in the midfield where De Celis has been known to push Sam Larocca to the right hand side to allow for James Stubbs-Mills and Marcus Stergiopoulos to play in the centre and Ante Moric on the left. He also has the option to playing three strikers with Zlatko Arambasic, Steve Karavataki, and Norman Tome all capable of playing in a three pronged formation.

At Gabbie Stadium, coach Brian Brown will table

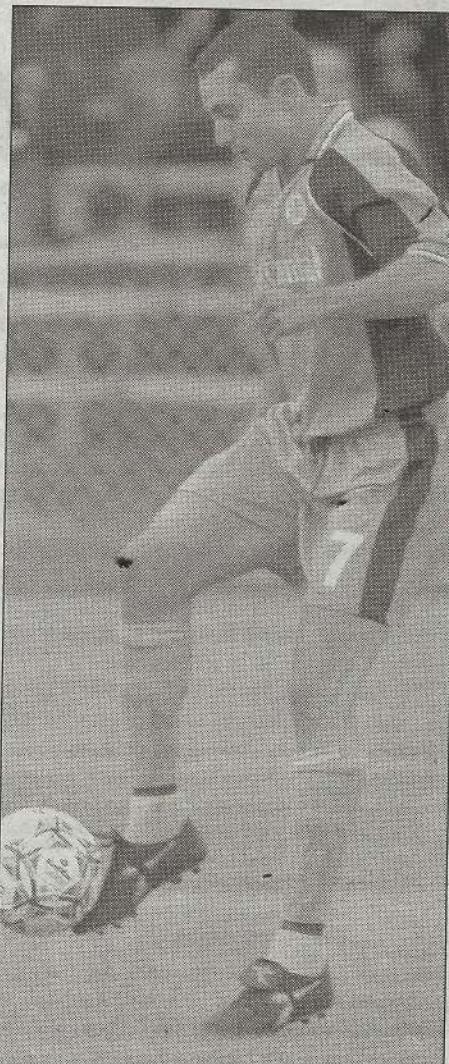
three sessions this week in a bid to bring his side up from their tough hitout against Bonnyrigg. "We'll train Tuesday and Thursday and probably one other session either Friday or Wednesday to relax and mentally prepare for the game" said Football Manager Don O'Regan.

Kain Rastall is the only player causing any concern, a knock on the ankle against Bonnyrigg leaving him a bit bruised but he is expected to have a light week on the training paddock and undergo a fitness test prior to kickoff. With the mind games starting this week, Demons coach Brian Brown has fired the first shot as his club looks to their sixth straight Grand Final appearance.

"Bring on A.P.I.A." said Brown emphatically. "We were beaten fair and square two weeks ago but we have no concerns that we can win the Grand Final and we have the players to do it." The big query surrounds the lack of form of strikers Colin Luff and Luke Roodenberg who have scored just one goal between them in their past six games. "They are quality players" said Brown, "and I have no hesitation in backing them to score goals on these big occasions. They are the sorts of players who can bob up with a goal and I have every faith they can do the job."

Whichever way it goes this Saturday night, it looks like being one of the most attacking Grand Finals in recent memory. These sorts of games have never been known for being high scoring, but with strikers the likes of Luff, Roodenberg and Catanzaro on side facing off against Arambasic, Karavataki and Tome it could well be a cricket score.

Given the quality of attacks, defence will hold the key, the side to score first holding a distinct advantage. Putting it all on the line, I'd have to lean ever so slightly to A.P.I.A., and not because of the home ground advantage, but because they have beaten Blacktown before and feel they might have one too many guns when the whips are cracking.



A.P.I.A.-Leichhardt's Sam LaRocca will need to fire in midfield if the Tigers are to take home the trophy.

GRAND FINAL TIPS

GREG WOODHOUSE (N.S.W. and Canterbury-Marrickville coach) - "It's a tough one, but I'd have to lean towards APIA. They just have two many quality players in Catlin, the Moric boys, Arambasic, Tome and I feel they have hit form at the right time of the season."

MANNY SPANOUDAKIS (St. George coach) - "I said last August that BLACKTOWN CITY were the side to beat and I don't walk away from that now. They have a well coached, very experienced squad and in the big games they invariably do well."

JOHN TURNER (Sutherland coach and former Super League Coach of the Year) - "The week off is very important in the leadup to these sorts of games and with the home ground advantage I'd have to say A.P.I.A. Grand Finals are traditionally hard-fought games so

I'd even go so far as saying that the side to score first will win. I just believe A.P.I.A. have hit form at the right time while Blacktown have just gone off the boil about six weeks ago and that might just decide this game."

JOHN SENTAS (Former St. George and Fraser Park coach) - "A.P.I.A. with the home ground advantage and big name players should be fired up for a big performance. Any side that has the likes of Langan, Catlin, Dee, Tome, Moric, Stergiopoulos and Arambasic will win the games that count."

JOE BRUNI (Bonnyrigg striker) - "I'd like to see A.P.I.A. win. It would be great for Les after all his time at the club, but really they look too strong for Blacktown who had a tough game against us last weekend."

LJUBE JANCEV (Bonnyrigg coach) - "BLACKTOWN CITY were beaten by A.P.I.A., so they'll have a chance to review their tactics and make the necessary changes. They have some very experienced players and if they play with the same determination they showed against us, they should win."

BILL PILOVSKI (Rockdale City Suns Director of Coaching) - "BLACKTOWN CITY don't often lose too many games and I suspect they might just pip A.P.I.A. here. It is going to be close, very close, but their Grand-Final experience might be enough to just get them over the line."

MARK STAVROULAKIS (ABSW Editor) - "I'd say Leichhardt. Their influx of National League players will get them over the line in the end."



SOCER NSW



NSW PREMIER LEAGUE 2002/2003 FINALS SERIES

GRADE 19 PRELIMINARY FINAL



Rockdale City Suns

1



Bonnyrigg White Eagles

3

By Paul Goodwin

Brilliant Bonnyrigg advanced to the Under 19 Grand Final with yet another wonderful performance that has seen a side that floundered in the early rounds come good at the right end of the season.

The most improved side in the competition faced the other big achievers, Rockdale City Suns, who had come into the Premier League on the back of a sensational Winter Super League season success.

This time, while Rockdale took an early lead, it was not long before the White Eagles were able to draw level and then go to a half time lead.

Once again the stand-out on the Bonnyrigg side was striker/midfielder Dejan Malenica, the blond haired assassin whose ability had already been seen in earlier matches in the finals' series.

It does look as though he may miss the big one after picking up another yellow card in this match, but if he does miss the big game he would at least be credited with doing so much of the enterprising work up front that was so necessary for his side's success in making it to the last showpiece match.

Along with his captain, Milorad Simonovic, whose influence was again felt all over the park, this pair and a team of talented individuals served up a great final for the fans at The Gabbie.

The further loss, in an earlier semi final, of striker Brendan Mitrovich will make Bonnyrigg's task that much harder in the Grand Final, but a team of this quality cannot be underestimated at all.

Rockdale went to the lead in just the 90th second when John Velegrinis advanced into the area to chase a chipped pass from deep and beat the

advancing Bonnyrigg keeper, Alexio Augusto, who had come off his line, perhaps prematurely, the Rockdale man succeeding with an exquisite lob into the roof of the net.

Stung by this early setback Bonnyrigg responded in the 13th minute.

The elusive Malenica dispossessed Luis Da Silva and set sail for goal.

He was on the right of the box, on its fringes,

when he found Alex Canak on the left of the box and Canak was able to cut the ball back from the byline for an easy finish by Todd Macrae.

There were many more chances for the White Eagles that were not taken, but few for the Suns, who were under a lot of pressure from an attack-minded Bonnyrigg.

In the 40th minute Savic played a clever free kick, after first consulting Malenica, curling the ball to the far post from out wide on the right hand edge of the area.

Malenica followed the script to perfection, sneaking in to glance home a neat header and give his side the lead.

A minute later he headed into the net once again, but this time he earned a caution for disputing a dis-

allowed goal.

With 66 minutes gone in the game Bonnyrigg extended their lead.

Canak again clipped the ball over an advancing keeper, Phillip Zabaks, after a ball had been played to him from deep and electing to shoot, when Macrae was also there to support him. Clearly he took the right option on this occasion.

For Bonnyrigg the reward of a Grand Final against Premiers Blacktown City Demons, but for Rockdale the satisfaction of knowing that their Premier League debut season had been exceptionally successful.

Club coach Bill Pilovski was full of praise for Bill Boskovski and his losing team on this occasion.

"They worked hard all season and deserved to be runners-up at the first attempt and they went on with the job in the Finals series too."

"We are all very proud of them at the club, he concluded.

ROCKDALE CITY SUNS 1
(J Velegrinis)

BONNYRIGG WHITE EAGLES 3
(T Macrae 13', D Malenica 44', A Canak 66')
at Gabbie Stadium, Seven Hills

Rockdale City Suns: 1 Phillip Zabaks, 2 Peter Malakovski (C), 3 Ghenadie Costiuc, 4 Sasha Stevoski, 13 Eban Luland, 5 Steven Suteski (14 Chris Jovcevski 70), 6 George Nastevski (15 Nathan Trajcevski 60), 17 John Velegrinis (11 Balazs Mate 70), 7 Luis Da Silva (17 Ricardo Leite 56), 10 Shannon Cole, 16 Glen O'Connor,
Subs not used: Nil
Coach: Bill Boskovski

Bonnyrigg White Eagles: 1 Alexio Augusto, 3 Marjan Novotni, 5 Dalibor Savic (15 Aroyan Abraham 88), 6 Dejan Malenica (16 Andrew Jalalaty 87), 7 Steven Nedic, 9 Nikola Zonjic, 17 Alex Canak, 18 Milorad Simonovic (C), 11 Todd Macrae, 19 Nikola Nacovski, 10 Dalibor Drca.
Sub not used: Darko Goreski (RGK),
Coach: Kiro Nikolovski



Dejan Malenica scored Bonnyrigg's second goal with a flying header.

FROM THE SIDELINES

With Greg Stock

*While the players of both A.P.I.A.-Leichhardt and Blacktown City enjoy their build-up for the big game this weekend, spare a thought for Bonnyrigg midfielder Joe Bruni. Having spent the last few weeks on the bench, Bruni was asked by coach Ljube Jancev to try and pull the game out of the hat in Golden Goal extra time and then had the misfortune of stepping up for a penalty kick at 8-7.

While the rest is history Bruni is taking the heartbreak well and will more than likely be at Lambert Park this weekend to see his former team mates at A.P.I.A. go around. "I'd been practicing my penalties at training the previous week and didn't have any problems" said Bruni. "I hit the ball sweetly enough to put it in the right hand corner but John Crawley picked the right way and that was that."

*For those of you hanging on the outcome of the A.P.I.A.-Leichhardt Ten-Pin Bowling tournament I can reveal that the winners were a couple of rank outsiders. The Moric brothers Ante and Joe and

their side got up in a close contest at the Enfield Bowl-a-rammer last Tuesday night.

*Central Coast striker and Premier League Golden Boot winner James Monie has signed for Malaysian club side Kedah, playing his first game alongside fellow Aussie Andrew Clark over the weekend. According to reports, Monie is "happy as Larry" and enjoying life in his new role as a professional footballer.

*Speaking of former Premier Leagues overseas, 'From the Sidelines' caught up with ex Parramatta Eagles midfielder Jimmy Bakis last week, who is currently in Singapore with Tampines Rovers. This time last year Bakis was preparing for his first Premier League Grand Final under former coach Tam Finlayson, to now plying his trade in the professional leagues of Asia. "The lifestyle is great over here," said Bakis from his apartment right in the heart of Singapore. "The standard is quite good, and the money side of things is excellent and I am really enjoying my time here." His roommate is none other than former South Melbourne midfielder George Goutzoulis, and the two enjoy a

laid back lifestyle off the park.

"It's great living with another Aussie and we spend a fair bit of time together. We train in the early mornings and evening here as it is so hot and humid during the day, but we do find the time to go shopping, see a movie, hang out by the pool, play table tennis. The only thing we miss here, apart from family and friends is a good Yeeros and Soulaki!" Not a bad sort of life by the sounds of things. One the subject of the Grand Final, the striker is non-plussed. "For the players the build up to a Grand Final is just the best, and on gameday you get nervous, but once you run out on that pitch, it's just another day at the office and you buckle down to the job at hand."

*Other Aussies making a splash in the S-League include ex Panthers midfielder Peter Bennett, Alex Duric and Marcus Phillips amongst others. Coasters utility Sean Matthews has been released by his club Sengkang Marine and rumored to be trialling with another, while Fraser Park midfielder Greg Collins was unsuccessful in his trials with Jurong and has just started a two-week stint with bottom club Tanjong Pagar. Saints midfielder Raphael

Bove has turned down an offer to head to Singapore for personal reasons. "It's unfortunate I couldn't go, so I'll see what happens with a view to play in the winter season, said Bove."

*Great news for Dolphins fans, the local council has finally approved plans for their long awaited grandstand at Cromer Park with work to scheduled to start this week, weather permitting. On the player front the club is expecting to have a couple of the younger Spirit brigade down for a few games in the off-season. Some of the rumored names include Kwasnik, Fisher and MacAllister.

*Former Rockdale City Suns defender Vadim Mikoutski has left Australia to return to his native Latvia and has resigned with his old club FC Valimiera.

*The player transfers have been coming thick and fast in recent weeks with a number of clubs taking the opportunity to bolster their resources with Premier League players. The ones we know about include; Peter Trajcevski and Malcolm Bideau from Rockdale to the Minotaurs, Spase Najdoski to Wollongong United,

Andre Glucina and Andy Amegashie to Auburn Star, while Robbie Todorovski is also set for a move to Coniston in the Illawarra Premier League. The Saints defender Jose Mendes and goalkeeper Michael Xuereb are off to Dulwich Hill, Archie Markopoulos to Fraser Park, Evangelos Petras to Crescent Star and Bruno Beddoni is at Western Rage.

*The N.S.W. state side starts their preparation for the game against Queensland in two weeks. Coach Greg Woodhouse and his Assistant Stan Ackerley are assembling the side this Wednesday with the players from Grand-Finalists APIA and Blacktown City expected to join the following week. The match will be played at Gabbie Stadium.

*The ranks of the referees become a little skinnier this week with the loss of highly talented whistle-blower Mark Hester. Accepting a promotion at work, Hester will be moving to Melbourne, his appearance in the season decider this weekend his last. He joins Brad MacKay as the second top line N.S.W. referee to move to Victoria this season.



SOCER NSW



WINTER SUPER LEAGUE REVIEW

By Greg Stock

Mother nature had the final say on round fourteen of the Winter Super League, with just one game on Saturday and one game on Sunday, all others falling foul of the weather.

There were a couple of rescheduled games during the week that did take place, the first of which was up at Cromer Park between Manly-Warringah and Fraser Park, with the Dragons taking all three points from an emphatic 5-0 win.

They led 1-0 after five minutes from a Phil Moss own goal, the Dolphins play-er-coach not enjoying one of his better games after an injury layoff.

Great goalkeeping from Steve Angelov in the Fraser goal at the 30-minute mark saw Manly frustrated with a double save from Damien Rosenthal and Justine Creighton keeping the score-sheet blank.

Liam Austin extended the Dragons lead soon after the restart with Tony Faria scoring their third shortly after from a Clint Mayberry cross.

Substitute Manny Papageorgiou then went on a great run and rounded the keeper to make it 4-0 before Austin finished off a great night for the visitors with a superb left-footed drive from the edge of the box deep into stoppage time.

In the other catch-up game Stanmore pulled off their biggest win of the season thus far in defeating Sutherland 3-0 at Seymour Shaw Park.

Playing to their strengths with a short

ball game and hassling their more profile opponents at every opportunity, the Hawks undid the Sharks to score two goals from defensive errors and nail a third five minutes from time.

Thirty-eight minutes in the diminutive Dimitri Nicolaou beat Zlatko Jovcic with a right foot drive from the edge of the area after stealing the ball from Mirko Jurilj.

Ten minutes from the end Chris Hunt caught the Sharks defenders napping when he slipped in at the backpost unmarked to put away a cross from Anthony Sarmistikas from another error.

Nicolaou scored number three after slipping in between Milan Crnokrak and Mathew Dihm with a run from deep.

Sutherland also had midfielder Dale Robinson sent off for two bookable offences midway through the second half.

In the only Saturday game, Hajduk Wanderers fought their way back from an early 1-0 deficit to defeat Sydney University 3-1 at University Oval.

Tyrone Lara gave the home side the advantage after 10 minutes when he put away a freekick from just outside the area, 'the students' unlucky not to make it 2 or 3 as the Wanderers struggled to get out of first gear.

After a half-time 'rev up' from coach Tommy McCulloch the visitors responded, seventeen year old sensation Chris Camilleri nodding down a header to square the ledger from a Nahuel Arrarte cross seven minutes into the second half.

Ryan Manente taking it to 2-1 when he was 'johnny on the spot' to put away a loose ball in the penalty box before

Camilleri got number two when he met an Arrarte cross just inside the six yard box.

Given their complete dominance of the second half Hajduk deserved the win but will need to keep their minds focused on the job for a full ninety minutes if they are to keep rising up the table. Rob Smithies toiled hard for the home side who again failed to take their chances.

On Sunday in the late one, Crescent Star crashed to their first defeat of the season with a 3-2 loss to Dulwich Hill. Not favoured by the wet conditions at Lidcombe Oval the Crescent Star jug-

gerault failed to hold out the fast finishing Dulwich Hill now coaches by former Socceroo Jimmy Patikas.

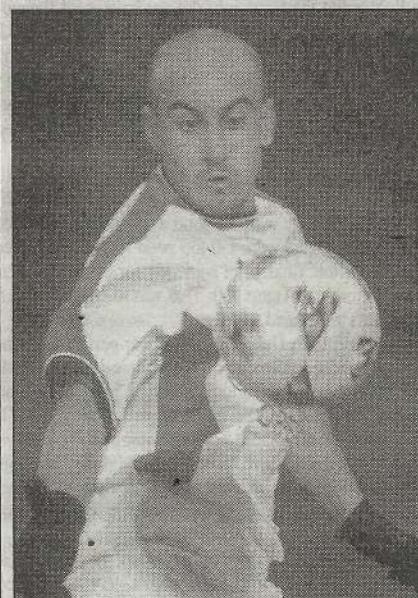
Goalscorers for the visitors were Ismael Arrarte, Jose Mendes and Marcelo Guerrero, while Tanju Balabanel and Yavus Ekinci got the goals for the home side.

In this weeks action there are two rescheduled games set down for Wednesday night weather permitting. Fraser Park host Hajduk Wanderers at Fraser Park in what promises to be a very exciting game, while Sutherland and Hurstville City Minotaurs clash at Seymour Shaw Park.

In round fifteen the action starts on Saturday at Cromer Park with Manly hosting Macarthur Rams.

On Sunday Hajduk do battle with Stanmore, Fraser Park and Crescent Star lock horns, AC United and Sutherland square off at Abruzzi Field, MSC Liverpool travel to Dulwich Hill while the Minotaurs and Ryde meet at Magdala Oval.

Stewart Porter and his Sydney University side enjoy the week off with the bye.



Goal-machine Tanju Balabanel

WINTER SUPER LEAGUE ROUND 15

- **AC United V Sutherland**
Sunday 1st June, Abruzzi Oval, 3.00pm
- **Dulwich Hill V MSC Liverpool**
Sunday 1st June, Arlington Oval, 3.00pm
- **Manly Warringah V Macarthur Rams**
Saturday 31st May, Cromer Park, 3.00pm
- **Fraser Park V Sydney Crescent Star**
Sunday 1st June, Fraser Park, 3.00pm
- **Hajduk Wanderers V Stanmore Hawks**
Sunday 1st June, Hajduk Stadium, 3.00pm
- **Hurstville City V Ryde City**
Sunday 1st June, Magdala Oval, 3.00pm
- **Sydney University SC v Bye**

WINTER SUPER & STATE LEAGUE RESULTS & TABLES

WINTER SUPER LEAGUE - ROUND 14:

FIRST GRADE: Stanmore Hawks vs Fraser Park
Dragons Washed Out, Sydney Crescent Star 2 (T Balabanel Y Ekinci) Dulwich Hill 3 (I Arrarte J Mendes M Guerrero), MSC Liverpool vs AC United Washed Out, Ryde City vs Manly Warringah Dolphins Washed Out.

GRADE 21: Stanmore Hawks vs Fraser Park
Dragons Washed Out, Sydney Crescent Star vs Dulwich Hill Washed Out, MSC Liverpool vs AC United Washed Out, Ryde City vs Manly Warringah Dolphins Washed Out.

GRADE 19: Stanmore Hawks vs Fraser Park
Dragons Washed Out, Sydney Crescent Star vs Dulwich Hill Washed Out, MSC Liverpool vs AC United Washed Out, Ryde City vs Manly Warringah Dolphins Washed Out.

WINTER SUPER LEAGUE FIRST GRADE

	P	W	D	L	F	A	GD Pts	
Sydney CS	12	9	2	1	42	23	19	29
AC United	11	6	3	2	25	16	9	21
Hajduk Wanderers	11	5	4	2	14	7	7	19
Sutherland Sharks	11	5	4	2	19	13	6	19
Stanmore Hawks	11	6	1	4	17	18	-1	12
Fraser Park	9	5	1	3	23	11	12	16
Manly Warringah	12	4	4	4	25	23	2	16
MSC Liverpool	11	4	3	4	17	16	1	15
Macarthur Rams	11	3	3	5	11	18	-7	12
Dulwich Hill	11	3	1	7	17	23	-6	10
Sydney University	10	3	0	7	12	18	-6	9
Ryde City	10	2	0	8	14	31	-17	5
Hurstville City Minotaurs	10	1	2	7	9	28	-19	5

WINTER SUPER LEAGUE GRADE 21

	P	W	D	L	F	A	GD Pts	
Manly Warringah	12	7	4	1	26	14	12	25
Sutherland Sharks	11	6	3	2	24	13	11	21
Stanmore Hawks	11	6	2	3	19	12	7	20
Fraser Park Dragons	9	6	1	2	23	10	13	19
Hajduk Wanderers	11	5	3	3	22	10	12	18
AC United	11	5	3	3	21	14	7	18
Dulwich Hill	10	6	0	4	16	12	4	18
Sydney University	11	5	2	4	19	17	2	17
Macarthur Rams	11	2	4	5	12	22	-10	10
MSC Liverpool	11	1	5	5	12	21	-9	8
Sydney CS	11	2	2	7	20	32	-12	8
Ryde City	10	2	1	7	8	25	-17	7
Hurstville City Minotaurs	11	2	0	9	13	33	-20	6

WINTER SUPER LEAGUE GRADE 19

	P	W	D	L	F	A	GD Pts	
Sydney CS	11	9	1	1	32	15	17	28
Manly Warringah	12	7	3	2	24	12	12	24
AC United	11	7	1	3	29	15	14	22
Stanmore Hawks	11	6	2	3	17	15	2	20
Sutherland Sharks	12	5	2	5	20	19	1	17
Dulwich Hill	10	4	4	2	18	12	6	16
Sydney University	11	4	2	5	18	21	-3	14
Fraser Park	9	4	1	4	15	15	0	13
Macarthur Rams	11	3	3	5	17	24	-7	12
Ryde City	10	3	2	5	12	15	-3	11
Hajduk Wanderers	11	2	2	7	11	24	-13	8
Hurstville City Minotaurs	12	2	2	8	14	28	-14	8
MSC Liverpool	11	2	1	8	20	12	7	7

STATE LEAGUE DIVISION ONE - ROUND 14:

FIRST GRADE: Hurstville ZSC vs Nepean Association Washed Out, Northern Tigers vs Mt Druitt Town Washed Out, Hills United vs Bathurst 75 Washed Out, Wanderers Cedars 3 (H Nohu 18m G Issa 75m S Nicola 84m) Liverpool Bossy 3 (M Damjanovic 45/56m P Iuketge 77m), Belmore Hercules vs Mt Pritchard Washed Out.

GRADE 21: Hurstville ZSG vs Nepean Association Washed Out, Northern Tigers vs Mt Druitt Town Washed Out, Hills United vs Bathurst 75 Washed Out, Wanderers Cedars vs Liverpool Bossy Postponed, Belmore Hercules vs Mt Pritchard Washed Out.

GRADE 19: Hurstville ZSC vs Nepean Association Washed Out, Northern Tigers vs Mt Druitt Town Washed Out, Hills United vs Bathurst 75 Washed Out, Wanderers Cedars 2 Liverpool Bossy 1, Belmore Hercules vs Mt Pritchard Washed Out.

STATE LEAGUE DIVISION ONE GRADE 21

	P	W	D	L	F	A	GD Pts
Nepean Association	12	11	1	0	56	42	34
Northern Tigers	13	9	3	1	24	9	15
Greystanes SC	10	5	4	1	28	19	9
Schofields Scorpions	13	8	2	3	34	11	23
Mt Pritchard	12	7	5	0	32	10	22
Hills United	12	7	3	2	43	12	31
Hurstville ZSC	11	6	2	3	22	14	8
Wanderers Cedars	12	6	1	5	29	16	13
Bathurst 75	12	4	.3	5	16		



SOCER NSW



YOUTH LEAGUE REVIEW

By Barry Davis

Premier Youth League Round 14

Olympic Sharks are back in the top spot on the Combined Table this week, displacing

Blacktown City who have slipped back to second place by four points. They are eight points ahead of Parramatta Eagles with Northern Spirit only one point further back. Wollongong Wolves round off the current top five and they are three points ahead of Marconi Stallions.

GOAL WATCH: There were only sixty-six goals scored in this division this week for an average of 1.88 goals per game.

Olympic Sharks, as expected, grabbed the majority of the points from their home games against **Southern Branch** but the scorelines were much, much closer than anticipated. The Sharks took the first points of the day with a 2-1 win in the 12s and then the 13s continued the good work with a 1-0 victory. Southern Branch's only pleasure from the day came when their 14s held the home team to a 1-1 draw. From that point onward as Olympics 15s took their game 1-0 and then the 17s followed up with exactly the same score.

Blacktown City had to be content with an equal share of the points when they visited **Parramatta Eagles**. The Demons took the early honours when the 12s won 2-0 and then the 13s made it six points for the day despite being reduced to ten players after fifteen minutes with a 1-0 result thanks to a Matthew Lewis strike. Blacktown's 14s gave the competition leading Eagles quite shock as the teams fought out a 1-1 draw to give Parramatta their first point for the day. From that point onward the Eagles took control, winning the 15s 1-0 and then taking out the 17s 3-0.

Northern Spirit returned to some good form across the board when they took thirteen points from **Central Coast** at Christie Park. Their good news for the home club started with a 3-1 win in the 12s thanks to goals from Justin Hayward, Luis Corneiro and Marco Sama while Tom Andrew provided the response for the Coasters. Spirit then continued the good work as the 13s posted a 4-0 win with three of the goals coming in the second half. Finding the net for Spirit were Umut Tokdogan, Dylan Saulwick, Brodie Mooy and Scott Tonkin. The Coasters got some points on the board in the 14s with a 3-1 win after leading 1-0 at the break. Luke McCoy scored a double for the visitors and Tom Gibbs added the other goal while Spirit's scorer was Chris Lekkas. Spirit took the points in the 15s thanks to a single second half goal scored by Adam Biddle. The trend for second stanza goals continued into the 17s when the home team snatched the points 4-2 after the teams were locked at 1-1 at the break. Edward Noel was the only Spirit starter to find the net while substitutes Adrian Hammond (2) and Daniel Murchison provided the other goals and the goals for the Coasters came from R. Russell and A. Bird.

Marconi Stallions paid a successful visit to **A.P.I.A. Leichhardt Tigers** as they picked up twelve of the available points for their efforts. Leichhardt drew first blood for the day with a 2-1 victory in the 12s but that was to be the end of their joy as Marconi took command from that point onward, starting with a comfortable 3-0 result in the 13s followed by a 7-0 thumping in the 14s. Marconi's competition leading 15s recorded a 2-1 victory while the margin of the 3-1 win for the Stallions in the 17s was a little larger than expected.

Penrith Panthers had a fairly successful trip to the south coast where they met **Wollongong Wolves** and escaped with half the points. Starting early with a three pointer in the 12s after winning 1-0, Penrith then held the better performed Wolves 13s to a 1-1 draw. Providing a few more shocks for the home club, the Panthers' 14s surprised with a 1-1 draw before their injury riddled 15s posted a very respectable scoreless draw. It was inevitable the Wollongongs second placed 17s would be too good for the cellar dwelling Panthers but the 1-0 scoreline will surprise many observers.

Sydney United would have taken some pleasure from the nine points they earned at **Newcastle United**. The visitors started well, taking all the points in the 12s with a 2-1 result and then their 13s provided a surprise with a 1-0 win over the fifth-placed Novocastrians. However, Newcastle's 14s then provided a shock of their own when they knocked off Sydney's fourth-placed side 4-1. Then Sydney's 15s recorded a handy 2-0 win to take the visitors tally to nine points while the Newcastle 17s were a bit too good for their opponents as they put together a 2-0 result to give the northerners six points for the day.

Sutherland Shire Sharks were another club to have performed well away from home this week as they took ten points from **Bankstown City Cubs**. Sutherlands 12s edged further away from the bottom of the table with a 1-0 win and then their 13s pulled closer to the top five with a solid 4-0 victory. This was followed by Sutherland holding their better-placed opponents to a 1-1 draw in the 14s. Bankstown were victorious 1-0 in the mid-table clash in the 15s before the visitors produced a real shock in the 17s when their second-last team rolled the competition leaders 2-1.

Super Youth League Round 14

Macarthur Rams have retained the lead on the Combined Table by four points on AC United who now have six matches in hand. **Manly Warringah Dolphins** are ten points back in third place with five matches in hand and Nepean Association are seven points further back with the same number of games up their sleeves. Northern Tigers occupy fifth spot, twenty-four points behind the leaders with two matches outstanding.

GOAL WATCH: One-hundred-and-seven goals were scored in SYL this week for an average of 3.14 goals per match.

Macarthur Rams hosted St George at Lynwood Park and kept eight of the

available points for themselves. Their 12s gave the club a good head start with a very healthy 6-0 win with the goals coming from Jake Woodrew (2), Dane Harrison, Ryan Conell, Taane Tupola and Dion Neal. Then their table-topping 13s were held to a 1-1 draw by the fourth-placed Saints. Casey Newman put the Rams ahead in the 27th minute but Christian Zeleny provided the equaliser from a goalmouth scramble following a free kick in the 48th minute. Then Saints 14s did very well to hold the better performed Rams to a 1-1 draw after forcing the home team to come from behind with an equaliser from James Young. Rams top-of-the-table 15s got the points in the 15s when the only goal of the game came from a penalty converted by striker Stefan Donevski. Continuing their recent form slumped the Rams 17s led 1-0 before they went down 2-1 in the closing ten minutes of play to the mid-table Saints.

AC United had a successful day when they hosted **Camden Tigers**, slipping twelve points into their pockets on the day. There were seven goals scored in the 12s match with the home club getting the points with a 5-2 outcome. AC continued the trend in the 13s when they posted a 4-1 result. Camden earned their only points for the day in the 14s when they shocked their better placed hosts with a 1-0 win. ACs 15s proved to be too good for the Tigers in the 15s, scoring four goals without reply and then the AC 17s continued to press for inclusion in the top five with a 2-0 win.

Mingara Lakers took the majority of the points when they hosted **Bonnyrigg White Eagles** but they certainly did not have it all their own way. In fact, the White Eagles took the first points for the day when their 12s got up 2-0 but the Lakers bounced back with a 5-2 win in the 13s. Bonnyrigg responded immediately when their Ian Lloyd coached 14s inched further up the table with a 1-0 result. Honours were even again when the Lakers won the 15s 1-0 after Bonnyrigg had missed a penalty. Mingara's 17s had their pedals to the metal as they rolled the White Eagles 5-2.

Northern Tigers were at home to **Hajduk Wanderers** and they did well to keep nine of the points. In the 12s the unbeaten Northern Tigers were victorious 3-0 and the 13s went on with the good work, posting a 2-1 result. In the 15s third-placed Northern Tigers were 1-0 too good for second-placed Hajduk Wanderers but then the visitors finally got some joy for their day when their mid-table 15s rolled the bottom-end Tigers 3-0. That was to be the last game for the day as the 17s match was postponed.

Manly Warringah Dolphins had a near-perfect day when they hosted **Hills United** and snatched thirteen points for their days work. Manly's second-placed 12s took their game by the odd goal in five, a scoreline much tighter than many would have anticipated. Then the fifth-placed home team were surprisingly far too good for the sixth-placed Hills, claiming the points with a 4-0 result. Last placed Hills 14s would have taken much pleasure from holding their much better performed hosts to a 1-1 draw. The Dolphins' sixth-placed 15s crafted a 2-1 over the fourth-placed Hills and then their 17s, sitting in tenth spot, sprang a real surprise when they knocked off the table-topping Hills 2-1.

Eastern Suburbs had a perfect day when they took all the points from visiting **Blacktown Association**. Easts began very well indeed when their fifth-placed 12s rolled the sixth-placed Blacktown 2-1. Going on with the job, their 13s then conjured a 4-1 win over their better performed opponents. Easts got home 1-0 in the 14s and then their second-placed 15s continued their very good form with a 2-0 result. Surprisingly, Easts cellar-dwelling 17s took the points in the 17s, beating sixth-placed Blacktown 4-2.

Nepean Association would have been a bit disappointed with the paltry five points they earned from the visiting **Fairfield Bulls**. They began well enough when their 12s easily accounted for the Bulls 4-0 but then their second-placed 13s were held to a 1-1 draw by the mid-table Bulls. The day was to contain more bad news for the mountain men when their top-of-the-table 14s were beaten for the first time this season by tenth-placed Fairfield. Moods would not have been improved when the third-from-bottom visitors held the mid-table home team to a scoreless draw in the 15s. Fairfields second-placed 17s had the final say for the day with a 2-1 victory.

Division One Youth League Round 14

Ryde City are still the front-runners in the Club Championship by a slender two point margin over **Schofields Scorpions** who have five matches in hand. They are only four points ahead of Mt Pritchard who also have five matches up their sleeves but fourth placed Wollongong United, eight points further back, have played their full ration of matches. They have a fourteen point buffer over Dulwich Hill who hold down fifth spot.

GOAL WATCH: There were 110 goals scored in this division for an average this week of 3.14 goals per match.

Ryde City could only manage to take eight points from their home games against **Wollongong United**. Leading the competition in the 12s, Wollongong were simply too strong for Ryde, winning the match 3-1. Wollongong also did well in the 13s, holding their better performed opponents to a 2-2 draw but the home club took the full three points in the 14s with a 2-1 victory. Rydes 15s lost the top spot on their table when United held them to a 1-1 draw and then Rydes 17s turned the tables on their guests with a 2-1 win that saw the south coasters drop back to fifth.

Schofields Scorpions had a good day at Garside Park where they met **Granville Association** and went home with thirteen very valuable points in their pockets. The only hiccup for the visitors came in the 12s when they were held to a scoreless draw by mid-table Granville. After that the Scorpions took full control with the 13s recording a 2-0 result to keep out of the top five. The Scorpions top-of-the-table 14s were too classy for the home team, posting a 5-0 win and then the 15s continued that trend with the same scoreline. The Brian Geezer

Summers coached Scorpions 17s returned to some winning form this week with a 4-1 result that sees them begin to climb back up the table. The Scorpions goals came from Dragan Savic (2), Michael Meini and Ben Szyfer.

Mt Pritchard would have been hoping for more than the ten points they earned from hosting **Hurstville City Minotaurs**. The day started well for the Mounties as they cleaned up Hurstville's 12s 5-0 and then their competition leading 13s made easy work of their 6-0 result. Mt Pritchards 14s also earned the full ration of points with a 2-1 result but that score was a bit closer than many had expected. Hurstville's 15s did well to hold the better placed Mounties to a scoreless draw and then the visitors 17s caught the home team off guard with an unexpected 1-0 win.

Dulwich Hill and **Parramatta City** shared the points equally at Arlington Oval. Parramattas second placed 12s were too good for the home team as they recorded a 5-0 result and then the visitors continued to do well when their 13s surprisingly held Dulwich Hill to a 1-1 draw. The home club evened up the points for the day when their 14s won 1-0 and then their top-of-the-table 15s maintained their unbeaten run with a 2-0 win. Parramattas 17s finished the day with a little shock for their host, unexpectedly winning the match 2-0 and relegating Dulwich Hill to fourth spot.

MSC Liverpool shared to points equally with **Canterbury Bankstown** at Hammontown Park. MSC came up trumps in the 12s with a 3-0 win and then they cost their guests the competition lead in the 13s with a 2-1 win. Canterbury Bankstown then picked up their first three-pointer for the day when their third-placed 14s won 3-1. The visitors also had a good result in the 15s when they held the better performed MSC to a 2-2 draw. And then Canterbury Bankstown's 17s rounded off the day with a 2-0 win that squared up the points for the club.

Rockdale City Suns would have been reasonably happy with their nine point haul from the clash with **Hawkesbury City** at the Rockdale Ilinden Sports Ground. Rockdales 12s surprised everyone with a 2-0 win but then Hawkesbury responded immediately with a 5-2 win in the 13s. The Suns resumed the points lead for the day when their 14s were 3-0 winners and then they went further ahead when their 15s continued their push toward the top five with a relatively easy 6-0 result. Hawkesbury's 17s shot to the lead in their competition when they posted a 2-0 win.

Mt Druitt Town took eight points from their Popondetta Park encounter with **Stammore Hawks**. In fact Stammore drew the first blood for the day when their well placed 12s recorded a surprisingly narrow 1-0 win and then the 13s battled out a scoreless draw. Mt Druitt's 14s won 5-1 against a Hawks team that is yet to earn a point and then their 15s put together a comfortable 3-0 win. Mt Druitt continued their success with a 2-2 draw in the 17s that cost the visitors the top spot in that league.

Catch-Up Matches

The Round 8 clash between **Stammore Hawks** and **Parramatta City** at Pratten Park started well enough with the visitors 12s claiming the points through a 1-0 win. However, the remaining matches were called off, no doubt due to the weather.

The Round 10 rescheduled encounter between **Hurstville City Minotaurs** and **Granville Association** at Rockdale Ilinden Sports Ground was called off before it began.

S.S.I. Girls Youth League Round 11

Almost the entire round was washed out as the rain returned to the Sydney basin on the weekend. The only matches to be played took place at the Mingara Club where Central Coast hosted North West Sydney Koalas. The Coasters started very well indeed, holding the visitors to a 2-2 draw in the 12s and then repeating the effort with a 1-1 draw in the 14s. However, the Koalas were far too good in the 16s as they breezed to a 15-0 win.

Southern Branch follow in seventh place overall. Their 12s and 14s are both really struggling in twelfth place but the 16s are motoring in top spot with an unbeaten record. **Blacktown Association** are a bit below par this season with their 12s and 14s already well out of contention in eleventh place in their respective competitions but the 16s are having a good season, placed second with the best attack in their league. **Wollongong Wolves** have had better seasons. Their 12s are out of the running at ninth place and the 14s are well off the pace while the 16s have a remote chance of playing in the finals series.

Central Coast Coasters are battling away in eleventh place overall. Placed eighth, their 12s have an outside chance but their sixth placed 14s are more likely to claim a top four spot and the 16s are having a really rough trot this year. **Northern Tigers** best placed team are the 12s who are seventh while their 14s are well out of it and the 16s have yet to earn their first point for the season. **Granville Magpies** are the current cellar dwellers. Neither the 12s nor 14s have earned a single point so far but they are to be respected as they continue to turn out each week. It is to be hoped that the lessons provided this season will help them long into the future. Their 16s are in tenth place, only two points from fifth.

attack Boys Metropolitan League Round 11

Gladesville Hornsby are now the sole leaders of this competition following their 1-0 win over Nepean at Cook Park. Granville have dropped to second place as a result of their first loss of the season, 1-0 to third-placed Bankstown at Garside Park. Eastern Suburbs are fourth after beating Central Coast 2-0 at Plum Park. Manly Warringah and Southern Districts fought out a scoreless draw at Cromer Park. The remaining matches **Macarthur Rams v Sutherland, Illawarra v Southern Branch, St George v Canterbury and Blacktown v Ku-Ring-Gai** were all washed out and will need to be rescheduled.

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PREMIER YOUTH LEAGUE GRADE 12

	P	W	D	L	F	A	GD	Pts
Blacktown City	12	10	2	0	30	8	22	32
Northern Spirit	13	10	1	2	40	15	25	31
Olympic Sharks	12	9	0	3	28	13	15	27
Wollongong Wolves	13	6	4	3	15	10	5	22
A.P.I.A. Leichhardt	12	7	0	5	17	17	0	21
Penrith Panthers	13	6	2	5	17	15	2	20
Sydney United	13	6	2	5	21	20	1	20
Marconi Stallions	12	5	3	4	22	17	5	18
Central Coast	13	4	3	6	17	19	-2	15
Parramatta Eagles	13	4	2	7	15	19	-4	14
Newcastle United	12	3	3	6	18	22	-4	12
Southern Branch YL	13	3	2	8	10	29	-19	11
Sutherland Shire	12	2	1	9	12	32	-20	7
Bankstown City	13	0	1	12	3	29	-26	1

PREMIER YOUTH LEAGUE GRADE 13

	P	W	D	L	F	A	GD	Pts
Blacktown City	12	10	1	1	29	8	21	31
Olympic Sharks	12	9	2	1	40	7	33	29
Northern Spirit	13	9	0	4	46	18	28	27
Parramatta Eagles	13	8	3	2	28	12	16	27
Sutherland Shire	12	6	5	1	24	12	12	23
Newcastle United	12	7	1	4	16	10	6	22
Wollongong Wolves	13	6	3	4	35	18	17	21
Central Coast Coasters	13	5	1	7	14	26	-12	18
Marconi Stallions	12	4	3	5	26	25	1	15
Penrith Panthers	13	3	3	7	18	21	-3	12
Sydney United	13	2	3	8	12	32	-20	9
A.P.I.A. Leichhardt	12	3	0	9	8	34	-26	9
Southern Branch YL	13	2	1	10	10	43	-33	7
Bankstown City	13	1	0	12	6	46	-40	3

PREMIER YOUTH LEAGUE GRADE 14

	P	W	D	L	F	A	GD	Pts
Parramatta Eagles	13	8	4	1	24	10	14	28
Marconi Stallions	12	8	1	3	23	13	10	25
Sydney United	13	7	3	3	26	13	13	24
Wollongong Wolves	13	7	3	3	28	19	9	24
Blacktown City	12	6	2	4	17	10	7	20
Olympic Sharks	12	5	4	3	18	9	9	19
Central Coast	13	4	5	4	17	13	4	17
Bankstown City	13	4	5	4	16	15	1	17
Northern Spirit	13	4	3	6	18	20	-2	15
Penrith Panthers	13	4	3	6	15	22	-7	13
A.P.I.A. Leichhardt	12	3	5	4	12	20	-8	14
Newcastle United	12	2	4	6	13	26	-13	10
Sutherland Shire	12	1	4	7	8	19	-11	7
Southern Branch YL	13	1	2	10	11	37	-26	5

PREMIER YOUTH LEAGUE GRADE 15

	P	W	D	L	F	A	GD	Pts
Marconi Stallions	12	10	0	2	29	11	18	30
Olympic Sharks	12	10	0	2	22	9	13	30
Northern Spirit	13	8	2	3	26	13	13	26
Parramatta Eagles	13	8	1	4	24	15	9	25
Blacktown City	12	7	2	3	18	7	11	23
Bankstown City	13	6	5	2	17	9	8	23
Sutherland Shire	12	5	2	5	16	15	1	17
A.P.I.A. Leichhardt	12	4	2	6	18	19	-1	14
Sydney United	13	4	1	8	18	23	-5	13
Wollongong Wolves	13	4	1	8	15	21	-6	13
Newcastle United	12	2	5	5	16	21	-5	11
Southern Branch YL	13	2	4	7	15	31	-16	10
Central Coast	13	2	2	9	7	26	-19	8
Penrith Panthers	13	1	3	9	10	31	-21	6

DIVISION ONE YOUTH LEAGUE GRADE 14

	P	W	D	L	F	A	GD	Pts
Schofields Scorpions	12	11	0	1	35	9	26	33
Ryde City	13	10	0	3	37	11	26	30
C'bury Bankstown	12	9	3	0	35	9	26	30
Mt Pritchard	12	8	0	4	22	20	2	24
Wollongong United	13	7	2	4	24	12	12	23
MSC Liverpool	13	6	2	5	26	19	7	20
Dulwich Hill	12	6	1	5	15	13	2	19
Mt Druitt Town	13	5	2	6	14	15	-1	17
Hurstville City	10	4	1	5	12	13	-1	13
Parramatta City	12	3	3	6	17	18	-1	12
Granville Assoc.	12	4	0	8	19	23	-4	12
Rockdale City Suns	12	3	2	7	21	28	-7	11
Hawkesbury City	12	1	0	11	8	42	-34	3
Stanmore Hawks	12	0	0	12	3	56	-53	0

DIVISION ONE YOUTH LEAGUE GRADE 15

	P	W	D	L	F	A	GD	Pts
Dulwich Hill	12	10	2	0	42	5	37	32
Ryde City	13	10	2	1	30	13	17	32
Mt Pritchard	12	10	1	1	39	5	34	31
Schofields Scorpions	12	7	3	2	27	7	20	24
Wollongong United	13	6	2	5	16	18	-2	20
Rockdale City Suns	12	5	3	4	24	24	0	18
MSC Liverpool	13	3	6	4	24	23	1	15
Mt Druitt Town	13	4	2	7	21	26	-5	14
Hurstville City	10	3	4	3	12	10	2	13
Parramatta City	12	4	0	8	10	27	-17	12
Stanmore Hawks	12	3	2	7	10	23	-13	11
Granville Assoc.	12	2	0	10	5	32	-27	6
C'bury Bankstown	1							



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- Preparation and administration of approved budgets to include talented athlete programs.
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- Co-ordination of submissions and reports, and effective liaison with the NSW Department of Sport and Recreation, NSW Institute of Sport, Soccer Australia and other State/Territory Federations.
- The implementation of programs within the State that promote and develops school soccer.
- Extensive knowledge of current trends in technical development and related sports training methods.
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- Strong business administration skills and computer literacy (MS Office package).
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- A comprehensive and practical understanding of specialist coaching resources and literature.
- Supplementary qualifications in Sport or Education.

The position is offered by way of a two (2) year contract. Remuneration will be commensurate with qualifications and experience. For further information contact Linda Christie – Human Resources, Soccer NSW Ltd on (02) 9629 1800 or email linda@soccernsw.com.au

This position is a Child Related Position and will be subject to a Working With Children Check. Prohibited Persons need not apply.

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WORLD

Top 25 Linked Player Moves

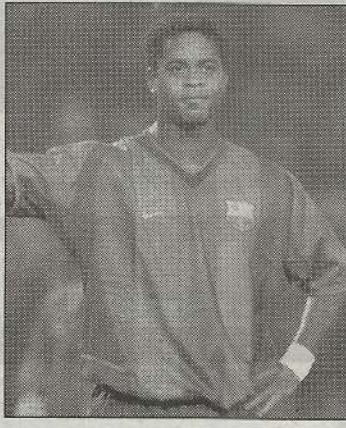
No.	Name	Pos.	From Club	To Club	Fee
1.	Patrick Kluivert (Hol)	ST	Barcelona	Manchester Utd	£7m
2.	David Beckham (Eng)	RM	Manchester Utd	Real Madrid	£38m
3.	Rivaldo (Bra)	FW	AC Milan	Middlesbrough	Free
4.	Patrick Vieira (Fra)	DM	Arsenal	Manchester Utd	£40m
5.	Roy Makaay (Hol)	ST	Deportivo La Coruna	Bayern Munchen	£?
6.	Robert Pires (Fra)	WG	Arsenal	Valencia	£?
7.	Damien Duff (Ire)	LW	Blackburn Rovers	Liverpool	£12m
8.	Harry Kewell (Aus)	LM	Leeds United	Manchester Utd	£6m
9.	Ronaldinho (Bra)	AM	Paris-SG	Manchester Utd	£12m
10.	Cafu (Bra)	RB	AS Roma	AC Milan	£?
11.	Ruben Baraja (Spa)	CM	Valencia	Real Madrid	Swap
12.	Djibril Cisse (Fra)	FW	Auxerre	Marseille	£?
13.	Savio (Bra)	FW	Real Madrid	Liverpool	Bosman
14.	Jaap Stam (Hol)	CD	Lazio	Juventus	Swap
15.	Mark Viduka (Aus)	ST	Leeds United	Tottenham Hotspur	£5m
16.	Claude Makelele (Fra)	CM	Real Madrid	Manchester Utd	£10m
17.	Pavel Nedved (Cze)	MF	Juventus	Manchester Utd	£?
18.	Pierre van Hooijdonk (Hol)	ST	Feyenoord	Birmingham City	Bosman
19.	Kevin Phillips (Eng)	ST	Sunderland	Tottenham Hotspur	£3.75m
20.	Dennis Rommedahl (Den)	RW	PSV	Manchester Utd	£5m
21.	Frank Lampard (Eng)	CM	Chelsea	Manchester Utd	£?
22.	Massimo Maccarone (Ita)	ST	Middlesbrough	AS Roma	£7m
23.	Philippe Cocu (Hol)	LM	Barcelona	PSV	Bosman
24.	Gareth Southgate (Eng)	CD	Middlesbrough	Newcastle United	£?
25.	Claudio Lopez (Arg)	ST	Lazio	Valencia	£4.29m



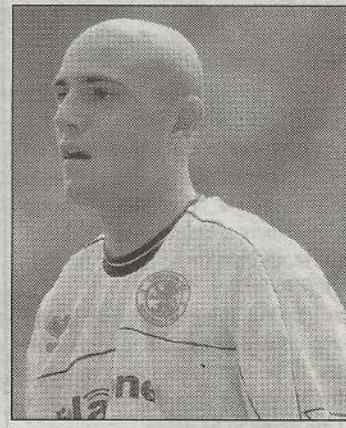
Damien Duff: Irish star has been linked with English side Liverpool.



Gabriel Batistuta: Argentine star could surprise many people and move to Saudi Arabian side Al Arabi.



Patrick Kluivert: The current Barcelona could be under Alex Ferguson's wing next season.

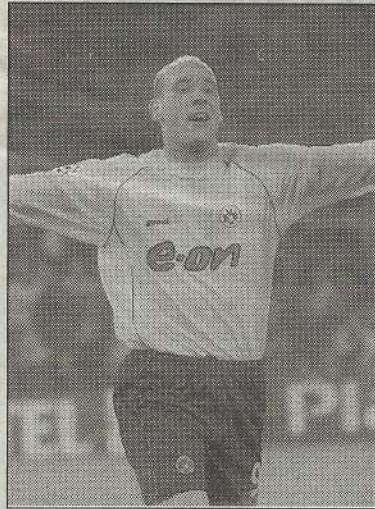


Massimo Maccarone: The young Italian star could go back home to former Scudetto winners AS Roma.



Rivaldo: Brazilian maestro could leave trendy Milan for Middlesbrough.

Heaviest Players



Jan Koller has been classed as one of the heaviest players in world soccer.

Tallest Players



Australia's own spider Zeljko Kalac is known for being one of the tallest players in the world.

105kg	Adebayo Akinfenwa	Barry Town	204cm	Tor Hognes Aaroy	Aalesund
102kg	Scott Bevan	Huddersfield Town	202cm	Zeljko Kalac	Perugia
102kg	Jan Koller	Borussia Dortmund	202cm	Jan Koller	Borussia Dortmund
101kg	Danny Shittu	Queen's Park Rangers	200cm	Ian Feuer	Un-attached
100kg	Richard Dunne	Manchester City	200cm	Fola Oniube	Preston North End
99kg	Marcus Hahnemann	Reading	200cm	Ben Futcher	Lincoln City
99kg	Pat Onstad	San Jose Earthquakes	200cm	Rob Jones	Stockport County
98kg	Peter Schmeichel	Manchester City	200cm	Jimmy Sorensen	Falkenberg
98kg	Dembo Touray	Djurgardens IF	199cm	Andreas Isaksson	Djurgardens IF
98kg	Caleb Folan	Chesterfield	199cm	Matthew Booth	Rostov Rostov-On-Don
98kg	Regillio Vrede	Iraklis	198cm	Peter Crouch	Aston Villa
97kg	Ed de Goey	Chelsea	198cm	Ed de Goey	Chelsea
97kg	Darren Moore	West Bromwich Albion	198cm	Stefan Postma	Aston Villa
97kg	Aleksandrs Kolinko	Crystal Palace	198cm	Frank Dauwen	Westerlo
97kg	Jurgen Sommer	MLS	198cm	Dembo Touray	Djurgardens IF
97kg	Thomas Perstedt	Gunnarsson	198cm	Luke Oliver	Wycombe Wanderers
97kg	Heinz Muller	St Pauli	198cm	Morten Hyldgaard	Coventry City
97kg	Tony Crane	Un-attached	198cm	Regillio Vrede	Iraklis
96kg	Paul Jones	Southampton	197cm	Nwankwo Kanu	Arsenal
96kg	Poul Hubertz	Farum	197cm	Brad Friedel	Blackburn Rovers

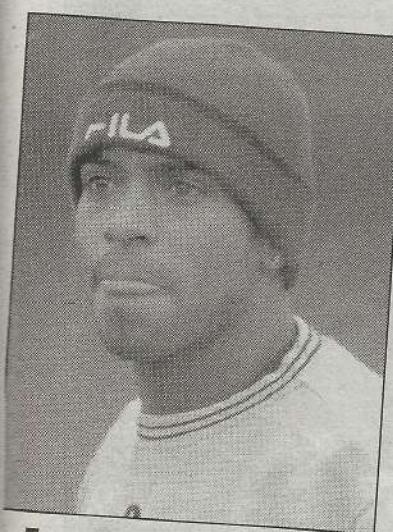
FIFA WORLD RANKINGS



1	Brazil	849	1	0	1	0	51	Trinidad and Tobago	560	49	-2	47	-4
2	Spain	785	2	0	3	1	52	New Zealand	559	50	-2	49	-3
3	France	782	3	0	2	-1	53	Slovakia	555	58	5	55	2
4	Germany	755	5	1	4	0	54	Iraq	541	53	-1	53	-1
5	Netherlands	752	6	1	6	1	55	Cuba	537	73	18	71	16
6	Argentina	750	4	-2	5	-1	55	Guatemala	537	54	-1	78	23
7	England	742	9	2	7	0	55	Thailand	537	54	-1	66	11
8	Turkey	728	7	-1	9	1	58	Hungary	534	56	-2	56	-2
9	Mexico	724	8	-1	8	-1	59	Scotland	530	63	4	58	-1
10	United States	719	10	0	10	0	60	Zimbabwe	529	60	0	56	-4
11	Denmark	715	11	0	12	1	61	Austria	528	57	-4	54	-7
12	Portugal	709	12	0	11	-1	62	China PR	526	58	-4	63	1
13	Czech Republic	705	15	2	15	2	63	Congo DR	521	63	0	65	2
14	Italy	702	13	-1	13	-1	64	Ghana	520	61	-3	60	-4
15	Ireland Republic	698	14	-1	14	-1	65	Estonia	519	65	0	60	-5
16	Belgium	682	16	0	17	1	65	Venezuela	519	69	4	69	4
17	Cameroon	673	17	0	16	-1	67	Côte d'Ivoire	518	68	1	64	-3
18	Costa Rica	672	21	3	21	3	68	Iceland	516	61	-7	58	-10
19	Paraguay	670	18	-1	18	-1	69	Zambia	515	70	1	66	-3
20	Sweden	662	23	3	24	4	70	Algeria	514	67	-3	68	-2
21	Korea Republic	660	19	-2	20	-1	71	Qatar	511	66	-5	62	-9
22	Serbia and Montenegro	659	20	-2	19	-3	72	Bosnia-Herzegovina	507	88	16	87	15
23	Norway	656	26	3	26	3	73	Jordan	495	70	-3	77	4
24	Russia	648	22	-2	22	-2	74	Canada	492	70	-4	70	-4
25	Japan	647	25	0	22	-3	75	Belarus	490	75	0	74	-1
26	Croatia	641	34	8	32	6	76	Haiti	488	74	-2	71	-5
27	Uruguay	637	27	0	28	1	76	Kenya	488	81	5	80	4
28	Poland	635	32	4	33	5	78	Peru	485	85	7	82	4
29	Romania	635	24	-4	24	-4	79	Mali	483	77	-2	73	-6
30	Senegal	634	28	-2	27	-3	80	Chile	481	77	-3	84	4
31	South Africa	628	30	-1	30	-1	81	Burkina Faso	478	79	-2	75	-6
32	Nigeria	626	30	-2	29	-3	82	El Salvador	475	81	-1	94	12
33	Ecuador	625	29	-4	31	-2	83	Angola	474	80	-3	76	-7
34	Iran	618	32	-2	33	-1	84	Indonesia	471	84	0	110	26
35	Colombia	612	37	2	37	2	84	Kuwait	471	83	-1	83	-1
36	Morocco	610	35	-1	35	-1	86</td						

WORLD

Sinclair Says He'll Stay With Hammers



And he says he would not be surprised if the club accept an offer for him.

"I have got two years left on my contract and I know the club has to make savings as there is a shortfall of between £15 million and £20 million, so there are going to be players leaving," Sinclair told West Ham's official website.

"I presume the players that are a bit older - like myself, David James, and a few others - might be considered worth letting go if there are clubs interested, and if it is advantageous to the club in the bigger picture to sell."

"But I am not going to be going in and knocking on any doors putting in transfer requests. If the club want me to stay and fight for promotion next year then that is what I am going to be doing."

"Obviously Jermain has been in the spotlight, there is Joe Cole, Michael Carrick, Glen Johnson, Steve Bywater, players of that calibre, and I think the club are looking to them to be an integral part of the promotion push next year."

"With other players maybe they will be trying to cut the wage bill a little bit and look for replacements. That is just looking from where I am stood, but the club might have a different agenda and we will have to cross that bridge when we come to it."

"If the club want to keep me I am most definitely going to be up for the challenge and make sure I start the season much better than I did last year."

Trevor Sinclair: Will stay with the Hammers despite the side dropping to the First Division.

West Ham United's England international winger Trevor Sinclair has pledged his loyalty to the club despite relegation to the First Division, and says he will not be seeking a transfer.

But he also accepts that West Ham may need to sell him in an attempt to trim their wage bill.

Sinclair was the Hammers' joint top goalscorer with nine Premiership goals in the season just ended.

Moyes considers Berger swoop

David Moyes has admitted that he wouldn't rule out the possibility of signing Liverpool midfielder Patrik Berger this summer.

The Czech Republic international is out of contract and available on a free transfer after failing to establish himself in Gerard Houllier's first team plans over the past couple of seasons.

It is understood that Berger is keen to stay in the north west of England, and a move to Everton would certainly appeal to him - although it would mean a salary cut.

"We're looking at a lot of players," admitted Moyes, and when asked about the possibility of signing Berger, the Blues boss replied: "I wouldn't rule it in or I wouldn't rule it out."



Everton coach David Moyes.

Dabizas close to Greek return

Magpies defender Nikos Dabizas has revealed that he could be about to return to Greece with former club Olympiakos.

The Greek defender is out of favour at St James' Park and has been told by Sir

Bobby Robson that he has no future at the club.

And with his contract due to expire next month, Dabizas has been in his homeland of late training with his former club, which he is hoping could lead to a

permanent return.

"I've asked if I can go back and train with the squad because I haven't played first-team football and I need to make sure I'm fit for the national side," said Dabizas.

VIEIRA SLAMS UNITED

Arsenal skipper Patrick Vieira has launched into a furious attack on title rivals Manchester United, claiming the Reds won this term's Premiership by playing 'rubbish football'.

The tirade comes hot on the heels of Vieira's boss Arsene Wenger lauding the Gunners as the best side in the country - despite the north Londoners' having allowed an eight-point lead over Alex Ferguson's men to slip from their grasp.

But while Wenger's words emanated the scent of sour grapes, those of Vieira are more considered and heartfelt - and perhaps equally misplaced.

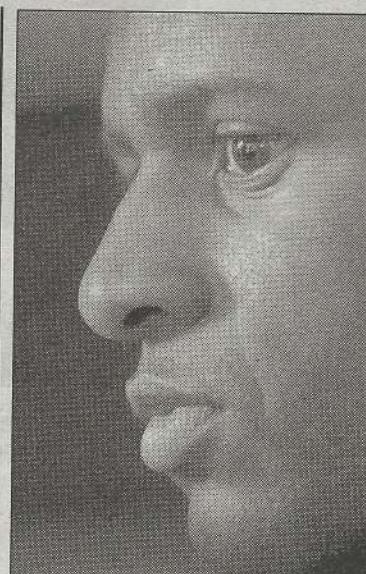
"I have seen Manchester United so many times on television this season and when I was watching they just did not

play well," said the French star.

"They were playing really poor football - really rubbish - but United have this or that player who comes up with a trick, they score a goal and then they win one-nil or two-nil."

"I think that was the difference this season. Arsenal are the better team. In fact, there is no doubt that we are the best football team in England."

"I tell you, Arsenal play fantastic football, but what has been shown is that playing fantastic football is not enough."



Arsenal skipper Patrick Vieira has labelled Man Utd as playing 'rubbish football' this season.

MILAN IN FOR CAFU

Following the news that Cafu is unlikely to move to Japan due to the Sars virus, the player looks inclined to accept an offer from Milan.

The Brazilian is out of contract with AS Roma, and the

Rossoneri's offer of 2 million euros for one year looks appealing.

Meanwhile according to the latest reports from Italy, AC Milan are willing to pay their grossly under-performing Brazilian international

Rivaldo up to £3m to agree to have his contract with the club annulled.

The 31-year-old former World Player of the Year has looked a pale shadow of his former self since arriving from Barcelona last summer and the

San Siro side are said to have lost faith in him to the extent that they would happily pay him such a large amount as they would otherwise have to pay him £13m in wages over the next two years.

Munich warn United: We want Makayay

Bayern Munich say they face competition from Manchester United to sign Roy Makaay.

Bayern manager Uli Hoeneß said: "Roy is currently top goalscorer in Spain, can win the championship with La Coruña and is being chased by Manchester United. He won't be cheap, that's for sure."

But he added: "We have always had our eyes set on Roy. He is an excellent striker and we want him, no matter who else does, too."

Hoeneß also criticised United for paying £30million for Rio Ferdinand.

He said: "Like Manchester we wanted to buy Rio Ferdinand, but Manchester United invested £30 million. I wouldn't have

When United played Real Madrid, Ronaldo made Rio's head swim.

"I'm glad now I invested the money in three defenders instead of one - Robert Kovac, Sammy Kuffour and Thomas Linke would not have been outplayed by Ronaldo like that."

Koeman admits interest from Barca

Ajax coach Ronald Koeman has admitted that he has been approached by a number of Barcelona presidential candidates to take charge at the Catalan club, but says he will remain with the Dutch side until 2004.

"I have given my word to Ajax that I will fulfil my contract which runs until 2004," the former Barcelona player told

the Catalan daily *El Periodico*.

"The club (Ajax) know that I would love to coach Barcelona but I signed a contract for two and a half years and until then I will devote myself to Ajax. I don't want to break my word even if it is for Barcelona."

Koeman, who enjoys a hero-like status at Barcelona after scoring the winning goal in the 1992 European Cup final

against Sampdoria, is seen as one of the few coaches who could unite the troubled club.

In recent weeks the Catalan press have speculated that one of the candidates for the presidency might unveil Koeman as the successor to present coach Radomir Antic in an attempt to gain an edge in the campaign for the next month's elections.



UEFA CUP FINAL

Celtic 2 FC Porto 3 (aet)

The UEFA Cup trophy is headed to Portugal for the first time as Celtic succumbed to Porto 3-2 in Seville with Derlei grabbing the winner in the 115th minute of play.

A double strike from prolific Celtic striker Henrik Larsson proved to be insufficient to hold off the Portuguese champions who had their own two-goal hero in Derlei.

But it needed an absorbing period of extra-time and the dismissal of centre-back Bobo Balde before Martin O'Neill's side capitulated.

Porto looked the better side for most of the first period opened the scoring seconds before half-time when Deco picked out Dmitri Alenichev whose volley was only parried by Rab Douglas Derlei stabbed home the rebound.

Celtic needed a much-improved second half and got the perfect start when Larsson met Didier Agathe's cross with a pinpoint header across the keeper after 47 minutes.

Within seven minutes, Porto were back in front when Deco teased and carved apart the Celtic defence again and Alenichev stroked the ball past an exposed Douglas.

But the Bhoys refused to lie down and Larsson evaded his marker to head home Alan Thompson's corner before the hour mark.

Both sides wilted in the humid temperatures as the game wore on and neither could fashion a clear-cut opening so the game went into silver-goal extra-time. Within four minutes Celtic were down to 10 when Bobo Balde's desperate lunge poleaxed Derlei in full flight and he received his second yellow.

And Derlei eventually punished that error by poaching the winning goal five minutes from the end of extra-time when he pounced on a loose ball in the box and drove past Douglas' despairing drive. Celtic refused to give in and Nuno Valente was red-carded in the final minute for a foul on Alan Thompson but they held on for a famous victory.

Teams

Celtic: Douglas, Balde, Mjallby, Valgaeren (Laursen 64), Agathe, Lennon, Lambert (McNamara 76), Petrov (Maloney 104), Thompson, Sutton, Larsson.
Subs Not Used: Hedman, Sylla, Fernandez, Smith.
Sent Off: Balde (95).
Booked: Valgaeren, Lennon, Balde, Petrov.
Goals: Larsson 47, 57.

FC Porto: Vitor Baia, Ferreira, Nuno Valente, Jorge Costa (Pedro Emanuel 71), Ricardo Carvalho, Costinha (Ricardo Costa 9), Alenichev, Maniche, Deco, Capucho (Marco Ferreira 98), Derlei.
Subs Not Used: Nuno, Cesar Peixoto, Clayton, Tiago.
Sent Off: Nuno Valente (120).
Booked: Nuno Valente, Derlei, Maniche, Marco Ferreira.
Goals: Derlei 45, Alenichev 54, Derlei 115.



Porto Players celebrate their victory over Celtic in this year's UEFA Cup Final.

SCOTTISH PREMIER LEAGUE

Barry Ferguson lifted the SPL trophy in front of a packed house at Ibrox as Rangers pipped their Old Firm rivals Celtic to the title on an incredible final day of the season.

A last-minute penalty from Mikel Arteta clinched the championship for Rangers after an extraordinary finale to a sensational season.

In the end it was all settled by goal difference as Celtic's 4-0 win at Kilmarnock proved to be one strike short of glory.

This was Rangers' 50th title - a world record - and was wrapped up with virtually the last kick of the game thanks to a 6-1 thrashing of Dunfermline.

The lead had been Rangers' earlier in the day and remained there for most of the proceedings, including the moments before Arteta's spot kick.

But there had been a point when Celtic were in the driving seat until a late flurry of goals allowed the Ibrox faithful to begin the party.

The first goal duly arrived after just two minutes and 25 seconds, with Michael Mols netting it on the turn but Jason Dair stunned the home crowd with a fine equaliser in the 11th minute.

That was until Claudio Caniggia continued his remarkable record of scoring against the Pars this season, netting for the seventh time after Fernando Ricksen's cross from the right had been deflected into the veteran's path.

Rangers' championship bandwagon was back on track thanks to two forwards who are likely to be shown the door at the end of the season.

Mols saw a penalty shout turned down by referee

Stuart Dougal and by the time the Dutchman had been denied by the first of two good saves by Stillie news had filtered through that Celtic were leading at Kilmarnock.

That meant Rangers were once again leading only by the number of goals scored but they went ahead on goal difference when Shota Arveladze threw himself across his marker to sent a glancing header past Stillie from Lorenzo Amoruso's pacy delivery from the left.

The Ibrox faithful went quiet again when news of Celtic's third at Kilmarnock came in, a goal that put the Hoops ahead on goal difference.

But Rangers then made it 4-1 to put them back in the driving seat through De Boer.

Rangers were back on top on goals scored - and two minutes later they were ahead on goal difference when Steven Thompson, who had come on for Mols in the 63rd minute made it 5-1.

There was time for a final twist in the tale however when McCann was brought down in the box by Walker and up stepped Arteta to slot home the penalty that won the title.

So Celtic's thrilling campaign had ended in more tears despite their easy win over Kilmarnock.

The holders of the trophy bounced back from their UEFA Cup final defeat with a Chris Sutton double, and Alan Thompson penalty and a Stilian Petrov strike.

But cheers were replaced by more tears as Thompson missed a crucial spot-kick, which proved so costly.

Celtic fans were on their feet in the 16th minute

when they took the lead.

Thompson swung in another inviting corner and Sutton timed his run to perfection to head past Gordon Marshall's despairing dive from close range.

Sutton doubled Celtic's lead just three minutes before the end of the first half when Thompson's cross hit him and fell nicely for him to prod the ball past Marshall from close range.

Whether the Celtic players were told the half-time score at Ibrox nobody knows, but they continued to go searching for more goals at the restart.

Celtic were awarded a penalty to go a goal ahead of Rangers in the 53rd minute when Shaun Dillon brought down Sutton in the box after a persistent run and Thompson stepped up to fire emphatically past Marshall to send the Hoops fans wild in celebration.

Celtic were threatening to run riot and for the first time the Celtic fans sang in full voice knowing their team were ahead courtesy of just one score on goal difference.

Celtic were given another lifeline in the 80th minute when Marshall brought down Thompson in the box, but he blasted the spot kick high over the bar.

Petrov picked his team-mates off the floor again with eight minutes remaining when he fired past the Kilmarnock goalkeeper from Larsson's inch-perfect through ball.

But the 4-0 victory was just not emphatic enough to deny Rangers the title.

Afterwards Rangers boss Alex McLeish said: "It feels absolutely wonderful."

In the day's other match, UEFA-bound Hearts

capped a fine season with a hard-fought but deserved 1-0 win over Dundee at Tynecastle.

It was Mark De Vries who got the all-important breakthrough after 78 minutes following great work by substitute Stephane Mahe, who had come on to make his final appearance for the Edinburgh club before returning to France.

Dundee United	0	Aberdeen	2	Hibernian	2
Partick Thistle	3	Motherwell	6	Livingston	2
Hearts	1	FC Dundee	0	Kilmarnock	0
Rangers	4			Celtic	4
Dunfermline	6				1

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Rangers	38	31	4	3	101	28	97
Celtic	38	31	4	3	98	26	97
Hearts	38	18	9	11	57	51	63
Kilmarnock	38	16	9	13	47	56	57
Dunfermline	38	13	7	18	54	71	46
Dundee	38	10	14	14	50	60	44
Hibernian	38	15	6	17	56	64	51
Aberdeen	38	13	10	15	41	54	49
Livingston	38	9	8	21	48	62	35
Partick	38	8	11	19	37	58	35
Dundee Utd	38	7	11	20	35	68	32
Motherwell	38	7	7	24	45	71	28

ITALIAN SERIE A

ITALIAN AFFAIR

By Joe Russo

This Thursday morning (Australian time) Juventus take on AC Milan in Manchester in the final of the Champions League. It should be a game well worth getting up for.

It is the first time that two Italian teams will meet in the final of the Champions League. This season has seen a real revival in Italian football.

After a few years of playing second, or perhaps even third, fiddle behind Spain's La Liga and the English Premier League, the Serie A has finally regained the number one billing in football.

Juventus, without Pavel Nedved, should narrowly beat AC Milan and make it a Scudetto-Champions League double.

Milan coach, Carlo Ancelotti, is a former Juventus coach and he will be keen to secure a victory against his old club.

Last week the greatest of them all, Diego Maradona, was in Italy to play in a charity golf tournament in memory of Niccolo Galli, who was tragically killed in a motorcycle accident last year.

The budding young Serie A footballer was riding to training for Fiorentina when the tragedy occurred. Niccolo, was the son of former Italian goalkeeper, Giovanni Galli, who represented Italy in Mexico 86.

Ironically it was Maradona who scored against Galli in that World Cup when Argentina were held to a 1-1 draw against Italy. The images of Galli flapping out a hand to save the Maradona goal have been played many times over and over.

At a press conference at the golf charity the great Maradona said that the Serie A was the greatest club competition in the world. He was very impressed at how comprehensively Juventus had outplayed Real Madrid in Turin.

The game in Manchester will hopefully put to rest some Champions League demons for Juventus and their coach Marcello Lippi.

In Lippi's first stint at the Juventus helm he led them to three Champions League finals but they only won one in 1996 against Ajax Amsterdam in Rome. It was a penalty shoot-out that finally resolved the game and that day Gianluca Vialli was the captain of Juventus.

Juventus were runners-up in the 1997 and 1998 finals losing to Borussia Dortmund and Real Madrid respectively.

Meanwhile AC Milan's last Champions League trophy was in 1994 in Athens when they comprehensively beat Barcelona 4-0 who were short-priced favourites that day because they had Romario in their team. It has been a long nine years for them too in Europe.

All the action starts at 4.30am (Sydney time) on SBS.

»»»

Sampdoria are back in the Serie A after four years in the Serie B. Their last appearance in Italy's top league was in 1998/99, but when they finished third last with 37 points, they were relegated.

Under the guidance of former Napoli and Venezia coach, Walter Novellino, they have easily gone through the Serie B field to win promotion. Novellino will remain at Sampdoria next year.

The club is based in the Italian port city of Genoa and their home ground is the picturesque Luigi Ferraris Stadium. The ground underwent major redevelopment for the 1990 World Cup and now comfortably seats 40,000.

Sampdoria is a name that derives from an old merger, on the 12th of August 1946, of two clubs, namely Andrea Doria and Sampierdarenese. The former was founded in 1895 and the latter just a year later.

Sampierdarenese first played in the Serie A in 1934 and then in 1938 they changed their name to Liguria. They were in and out of the Serie A during the war and in 1946 the new club was born.

Throughout their post war history they have been predominantly a Serie A team. They spent the 1966/67 season in Serie B only to be promoted back the following year. They spent five consecutive seasons there again between 1977 and 1982 and now the last four seasons have also been in the Serie B.

The greatest moment in the history of Sampdoria was in 1991 when they won their only Italian league title (Scudetto). Their then coach was the Yugoslav, Vujadin Boskov, and their strike force was comprised of the deadly duo of Vialli and Roberto Mancini, now coach of Lazio.

The Vialli-Mancini (Etwins, as they were then known), were the envy of every Serie A club. The eight years they spent together at Sampdoria are fondly remembered. Both joined the club as relatively unknown teenagers and left as superstars.

In 1992 they were runners up to Barcelona 1-0 at Wembley Stadium in the final of the Champions Cup (the old Champions League) thanks to an extra time goal from Ronald Koeman.

In 1990 they won the old European Cup Winners' Cup and they have also won the Italian Cup on four occasions (1985, 1988, 1989 and 1994). Welcome back Samp!

ROMA 1
ATALANTA 2
and
BOLOGNA 0
REGGINA 2

Atalanta and Reggina must play off to avoid the last relegation place in Serie A following an exciting final day of the season in Italy.

Atalanta pulled off a fine 2-1 victory over Roma, whose poor Serie A season ended on a disappointing note, while Reggina also won 2-0 at Bologna.

Modena and Empoli finished level on points with both clubs, but the results in the head-to-head between the four clubs left Atalanta and Reggina needing to play off to avoid joining Torino, Como and Piacenza in Serie B.

If Reggio Calabria-based Reggina go down the south of Italy would then have no team in the top division unless Lecce can win promotion from Serie B.

By the time Atalanta scored their first goal through Cristiano Doni in the 26th minute, their relegation rivals Reggina and Modena had both taken the lead in their matches.

Three minutes later Roma restored parity through youngster Daniele De Rossi, but Carmine Gautieri's second-half strike earned the win and sparked celebrations from the visiting fans from Bergamo.

Reggina, backed by a huge travelling army of fans who made the trip from Reggio Calabria, did not take long to fulfil their part of the bargain.

After 11 minutes, their Italy Under-21 striker Emiliano Bonazzoli put the visitors in front.

However, midway through the second half David Di Michele doubled the lead for the only southern Italian club in Serie A.

BRESCIA 2

MODENA 2

Modena survived a knee-trembling second-half slump to preserve the 2-2 draw at Brescia which secures another season in Serie A for the club that returned to the top flight last year after a 38-year absence.

Modena seized the initiative with two quick goals early on, Giuseppe Colucci scoring after four minutes, and 16 minutes later Fabio Vignaroli doubled the lead.

As news filtered through that relegation rivals Atalanta and Reggina were both winning, Modena slumped in the second half, conceding goals from Antonio Filippini and Roberto Baggio but they managed to hold out.



Roberto Baggio: The pony tailed striker bagged Brescia's second goal.



Hernán Crespo (right) celebrates with Marco Materazzi (left) and Javier Zanetti after one of his two goals for Inter Milan.

EMPOLI 0

PARMA 2

Parma booked themselves a place in next season's UEFA Cup on Saturday after sinking Empoli 2-0.

Romanian striker Adrian Mutu's 17th goal of the season gave Parma a slender lead and Antonio's twin brother Emanuele Filippini made the victory secure with the second goal of the game four minutes from the end.

JUVENTUS 4

CHIEVO 3

Liver Bierhoff brought his Serie A career to a magnificent finish with a hat-trick against Juventus, but the champions still ran out 4-3 winners over Chievo to ruin the Verona club's UEFA Cup dreams.

Juventus were far from their best and rested a number of players with Wednesday's Champions League final in mind.

They still looked to be cruising to victory at 2-0 early in the second half thanks to two Marcelo Zalayeta goals, but Bierhoff pulled one back.

David Trezeguet restored the two-goal advantage and when Lorenzo D'Anna was sent off in the 72nd minute there looked to be no hope for the visitors.

But Bierhoff, who announced this week that he would quit Italian football - and perhaps the game altogether - at the end of the season, had other ideas, pulling Chievo level with two quick goals and at that stage they had one foot in the UEFA Cup.

Yet Luigi Del Neri's team could not hold on to the draw and Cristian Zenoni came up from the back to net an 87th-minute winner for the Bianconeri.

INTER MILAN 2

PERUGIA 2

Inter Milan signed off a season which failed to deliver on its early promise by conceding a late equaliser to draw 2-2 at home with Perugia.

Hernan Crespo twice put them in front but Christian Obodo levelled the first goal just after half-time and Marco Di Loreto equalised the second in the 89th minute.

Although Inter finished second in Serie A, they will view that as a disappointment and a missed chance to secure their first Scudetto since 1989.

They also lost to city rivals AC Milan in the semi-finals of the Champions League and it remains to be seen if coach Hector Cuper will pay the price for that result with his job.

PIACENZA 4

AC MILAN 2

Piacenza ended a miserable season on a positive note by thrashing Carlo Ancelotti's under-

strength AC Milan 4-2.

Ancelotti decided to rest his senior players ahead of Wednesday's Champions League final against Juventus, to be played at Old Trafford.

UDINESE 2

LAZIO 1

Milan held onto third place in Serie A though, after nearest rivals Lazio lost 2-1 at Udinese - a result which put the Udine club in the UEFA Cup.

Lazio finished fourth to gain a Champions League place and will be glad to see the back of a season which has been blighted by financial trouble.

COMO 1

TORINO 0

Finally, Como left it late before winning the battle of Serie A's doomed bottom two against Torino 1-0.

The dates for the two-legged play-off to decide whether Reggina or Atalanta will be relegated to Serie B have been set.

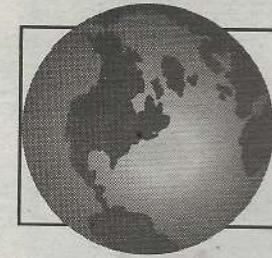
Reggina will have home advantage at their Granillo Stadium at Reggio Calabria for the first-leg match on May 29 with an evening kick-off.

The second leg in Atalanta's home town of Bergamo will be staged on June 1, also in the evening.

AS Roma 1 Atalanta 2, Bologna 0 Reggina 2, Brescia 2 Modena 2, Como 1 Torino 0, Empoli 0 Parma 2, Inter Milan 2 Perugia 2, Juventus 4 Chievo 3, Piacenza 4 AC Milan 2, Udinese 2 Lazio 1.

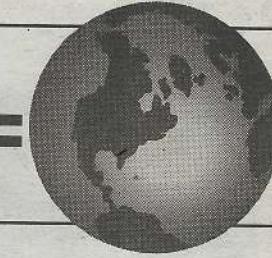
FINAL STANDINGS

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Juventus	34	21	9	4	64	29	72
Inter Milan	34	19	8	7	64	38	65
AC Milan	34	18	7	9	55	30	61
Lazio	34	15	15	4	57	32	60
Parma	34	15	11	8	55	36	56
Udinese	34	16	8	10	38	35	56
Chievo	34	16	7	11	51	39	55
Roma	34	13	10	11	55	46	49
Brescia	34	9	15	10	36	38	42
Perugia	34	10	12	12	40	48	42
Bologna	34	10	11	13	39	47	41
Empoli	34	9	11	14	36	46	38
Atalanta	34	8	14	12	35	47	38
Reggina	34	10	8	16	38	53	38
Modena	34	9	11	14	30	48	38
Piacenza	34	8	6	20	44	62	30
Como	34	4	12	18	29	57	24
Torino	34	4	9	21	23	58	21



ABSW

WORLD



Primera Liga

Real Sociedad reclaimed top spot in the Spanish first division from title rivals Real Madrid after a 2-0 victory over 10-man Malaga in a tense encounter at the Rosaleda stadium on Sunday.

The win meant the Basque side re-established their one point advantage over Real, who had taken over at the top on Saturday after a classy Ronaldo double helped them to a 2-1 win over last season's champions Valencia at the Mestalla.

With just three games left, Sociedad lead the table on 72 points, one ahead of Real and six ahead of Deportivo Coruna who look to have waved goodbye to their title chances following their 3-0 defeat at Galician rivals Celta Vigo on Saturday.

Sociedad lacked their usual fluency and composure as they took on a highly motivated Malaga, knowing that only a win would allow them to return to the top.

They had the better of the possession but were unable to make inroads against the well-organised Malaga defence, who appeared determined to make amends after last week's 5-1 thrashing at Real Madrid.

But Sociedad were given their chance when Malaga were reduced to 10 men with half an hour left when midfielder Sandro was dismissed after he picked up a second booking.

The Basque team made their numerical advantage pay 15 minutes later when midfielder Igor Gabilondo netted with a powerful header after defender Aitor Lopez Rekarte had unpicked the Malaga defence with a tricky run and cross from the right.

Serbian striker Darko Kovacevic made sure of the victory two minutes from time when he latched on to a superb through ball from defender Bjorn Tore Kvarme, dribbled his way past one defender and finished off with a delicate chip over keeper Pedro Contreras to score his 19th goal of the season.

At the other end of the table Alaves and Recreativo Huelva look destined to drop out of the top flight after the two sides suffered comprehensive defeats against Catalan sides Espanyol and Barcelona on Sunday.

Alaves lost 3-1 away to fellow strugglers Espanyol, while Recreativo went down by the same scoreline at home to Barcelona.

Bar a spectacular change in fortunes, the two sides seem set to drop out of the top flight alongside basement club Rayo Vallecano who were left teetering on the brink of relegation after their goalless draw against Osasuna on Saturday.

Alaves and Recre are now four points adrift of the safety zone with just three games left to play, while Rayo need to win all their matches and hope Osasuna lose all theirs if they are to escape the drop.

Espanyol's victory practically guaranteed their survival in the first division as it took them eight points clear of the drop zone.

Strikers Javier Saviola, Patrick Kluivert and midfielder Juan Roman Riquelme scored impressive goals in Barcelona's win at Recre, but Radomir Antic's side are still four points behind Athletic Bilbao, who occupy the final UEFA Cup place.

Ethniki Kategoria

Olympiakos pipped Athens neighbour Panathinaikos to be crowned champion of Greece for the seventh successive season.

With both sides level on points going into the final round, Olympiakos hammered Xanthi 5-1 to seal the title due to a superior head-to-head record against its bitter derby rival.

Haralampos Houtos scored twice in the first half while Stelios Giannakopoulos, Alekos Alexandris and Uruguay's Nery Alberto Castillo added singles in the second half to ensure a 32nd league championship.

Olympiakos' record for the season read 17 wins, seven draws and two defeats.

Panathinaikos beat Akratitos 3-1 and even though it finished on 58 points from 26 games, it had to settle for second best yet again.

The Greek capital produced all three Champions League qualifiers with the top two going through to the main draw while AEK Athens beat Panionios 4-2 to seal third spot, which secures a place in the qualifying round of Europe's elite club competition.

PAOK Salonika lost 3-2 at Giannina but still finished fourth to wrap up a UEFA Cup berth along with Panionios and Aris Salonika.

In other results, Ionikos swept aside Panahaiki 3-0 while Kallithea recorded a 2-0 victory over OFI Crete.

Panathinaikos striker Nikos Limberopoulos topped the scoring chart with 16 goals, closely followed by Olympiakos duo Giannakopoulos (15) and Houtos (10).

Panahaiki is relegated with Halkidona and Panegialeos making the step up from the second division.

Ioannina's win could save it from relegation but first the club must win their appeal against a points penalty over unpaid debts.

If it does it will then play-off against the third-placed second division for a place in the top flight with Ionikos relegated.

If Ioannina's appeal is unsuccessful it will go down and Ionikos will be granted a place in the play-off.

Dutch Eredivisie

The Dutch title race will be decided on the final day of the season after leaders PSV Eindhoven beat Utrecht 2-0 and second-placed Ajax Amsterdam won 2-1 at Twente Enschede in the first division on Sunday.

PSV will go into their final match at Groningen on Thursday needing just a draw to secure their third title in the last four years as they have a three point lead at the top of the table, 83 to Ajax's 80, and an advantage of six in goal difference.

Defending champions Ajax host Heerenveen in their final match.

Feyenoord's last hopes of claiming the title disappeared after they dropped two points with a 1-1 draw at Willem II Tilburg. They are now three points behind Ajax with 77 points.

PSV started well against Utrecht and Arnold Bruggink opened the scoring after just three minutes. Mateja Kezman added the second from the penalty spot after half an hour, his 35th goal of the season.

Ajax struggled for more than an hour in Enschede before captain Cristian Chivu opened the scoring with a penalty. Rafael van der Vaart doubled the lead eight minutes from time and Colin John got one back for Enschede in the final minute.

Ajax have all but secured second place and entry to the third qualifying round of the Champions League, as they have a vastly superior goal difference (13) to Feyenoord.

Feyenoord played poorly for an hour at Willem II and the home side took the lead when James Quinn headed the ball past goalkeeper Patrick Lodewijks from close range.

Bonaventure Kalou levelled the scores 17 minutes from the end, but it was not enough to extend PSV's 13-match winning streak.

Fourth-placed Roda JC Kerkrade beat RKC Waalwijk 1-0 to boost their chances of qualifying for the UEFA Cup next season, the only goal coming through Yuri Cornelisse who put through his own net after 18 minutes.

Roda JC have 50 points, one more than NAC Breda, who crushed AZ Alkmaar 4-0 on Sunday with goals from Rob Penders, Alfred Schreuder, Orlando Engelaar - a penalty - and Marcel Koning.

NEC Nijmegen, who are sixth on 48 points, could only manage a goalless draw with Zwolle, while Heerenveen kept themselves in the race for a UEFA Cup spot by humiliating RBC Roosendaal 6-0. They are seventh on 47 points.

Bottom club Graafschap Doetinchem had a Dave Zafarin goal to thank for three crucial points after their 1-0 win over Groningen.

Graafschap are now level on 23 points with 17th placed club Excelsior Rotterdam but with inferior goal difference.

Excelsior drew 4-4 with Vitesse Arnhem on Sunday, saving a point when Mounir El Hamdoui equalized four minutes from time.

Vitesse were a man down after goalkeeper Dragoslav Jevric had been sent off in the first half. Matthew Amoah scored a hat-trick for Vitesse.

The bottom club are relegated automatically, while the teams finishing 16th and 17th in the 18-team division go into a playoff with the loser going down.

Spanish Primera Liga

Athletic Bilbao 2 Racing Santander 1, Atletico Madrid 3 Villarreal 2, Celta de Vigo 3 Deportivo La Coruna 0, Rayo Vallecano 0, Osasuna 0, Valencia 1 Real Madrid 2, Espanyol 3 Deportivo Alaves 1, Mallorca 1 Sevilla 3, Recreativo Huelva 1 Barcelona 3, Real Betis 2 Valladolid 2, Malaga 0 Real Sociedad 2.

Team	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Real Sociedad	35	21	9	5	65	41	72
Real Madrid	35	20	11	4	78	40	71
D Coruna	35	20	6	9	60	41	66
Celta Vigo	35	16	9	10	41	31	57
Valencia	35	16	8	11	51	31	
Athletic Bilbao	35	14	9	12	58	55	51
Atletico Madrid	35	12	11	12	49	46	47
Sevilla	35	12	11	12	35	33	47
Barcelona	35	12	11	12	56	45	47
Mallorca	35	13	8	14	46	54	47
Real Betis	35	11	12	12	47	50	45
Malaga	35	10	13	12	40	44	43
Villarreal	35	11	10	14	40	46	43
Espanyol	35	10	12	13	43	45	42
Valladolid	35	11	9	15	34	37	42
Racing Santander	35	12	5	18	45	55	41
Osasuna	35	9	11	15	31	44	38
RecreativoHuelva	35	8	10	17	34	59	34
CD Alaves	35	8	10	17	35	62	34

Greek First Division

Proodeftiki 1 Egaleo Athens 1, Aris Saloniki 2 Iraklis Saloniki 1, AEK Athens 4 Panionios 2, Giannina 3 PAOK Saloniki 2, Ionikos Nikea 3 Panahaiki Patras 0, Kallithea 2 OFI Crete 0 Panathinaikos 3 Akratitos 1, Xanthi 1 Olympiakos Piraeus 5

Team	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Olympiakos	30	21	7	2	75	21	70
Panathinaikos	30	22	4	4	50	19	70
AEK	30	21	5	4	74	29	68
PAOK	30	16	5	9	59	38	53
Panionios	30	15	8	7	35	25	53
Aris	30	15	6	9	37	34	51
Iraklis	30	15	4	11	44	37	49
OFI	30	12	8	10	39	34	44
Xanthi	30	8	11	11	31	33	35
Aigaleo	30	7	10	13	28	44	31
Proodeftiki	30	7	9	14	25	38	30
Kallithea	30	6	8	16	29	46	26
Akratitos	30	7	5	18	33	62	26
Giannina	30	6	7	17	25	44	25
Ionikos	30	5	9	16	22	42	24
Panahaiki	30	1	6	23	11	71	9

Dutch Eredivisie

De Graafschap 1 FC Groningen 0, Excelsior Rotterdam 4 Vitesse Arnhem 4, FC Twente Enschede 1 Ajax Amsterdam 2, NAC Breda 4 AZ Alkmaar 0, NEC Nijmegen 0 FC Zwolle 0, PSV Eindhoven 2 FC Utrecht 0, Roda Kerkrade 1 RKC Waalwijk 0, SC Heerenveen 6 RBC Roosendaal 0, Willem II Tilburg 1 Feyenoord Rotterdam 1.

Team	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
PSV	33	26	5	2	87	20	83
Ajax	33	25	5	3	93	32	80
Feyenoord	33	24	5	4	86	38	77
Roda JC	33	14	8	11	57	51	50
NAC	33	12	13	8	40	30	49
NEC	33	13	9	11	40	40	48
Heerenveen	33	13	8	12	61	52	47
RKC	33	14	4	15	44	50	46
FC Utrecht	33	11	11	11	46	47	44
Willem II	33	11	9	13	48	49	42
FC Twente	33						

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